

THE PROVERBS
OF
G O Y A

by

BLAMIRE YOUNG



*With thirty-two
Illustrations*

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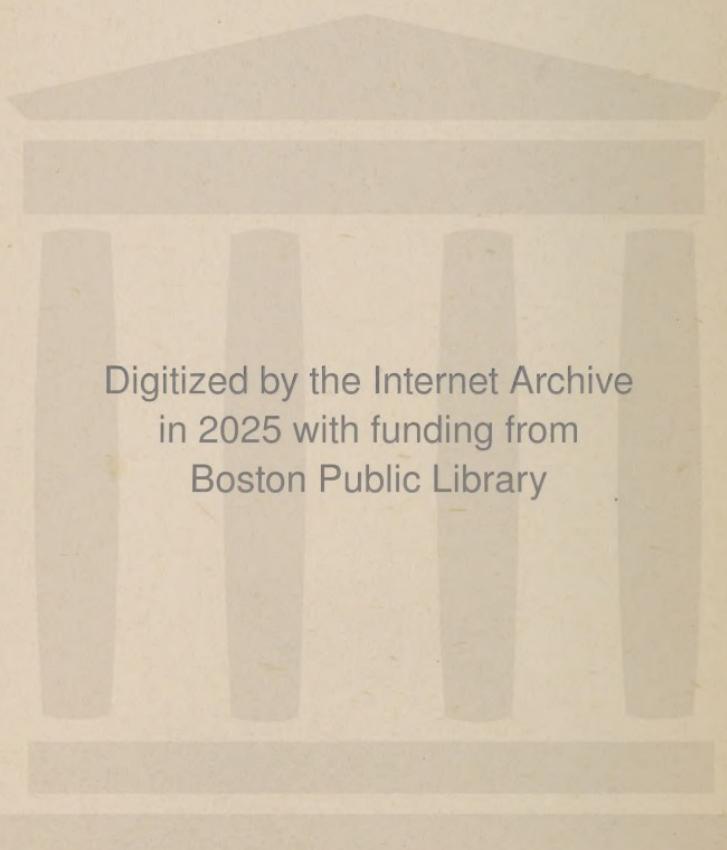
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The Proverbs of Goya



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THE COLOSSUS
frontispiece

The Proverbs of Goya

Being an account of "Los Proverbios,"
examined and now for the first time explained

by Blamire Young, R.I., R.B.A.

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Dedication

Spain needs no calf-bound testimonial from me, nevertheless for the love I bear her, greater even than my love for Australia, I dedicate to the Spirit and Soul of Spain this book, in which I have been able to reveal some further details of the mind of her illustrious son, and so added another jewel to her crown.

In these degenerate days Spain has preserved more than any other nation the essential traditions of humanity and has successfully resisted the attempts of outsiders to feminize her and bring her into line with their own emasculated ideals.

May Spain keep her natural characteristics untouched—her bull-rings, her virility, her women—for her inspired and magnificent brutality may yet be needed to accomplish the reinvigoration of an enervated Europe.

MELBOURNE.

B. Y.

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Goya, Thinker

IN an age of turbulent thinkers that held many great names, the name of Goya has always been placed among the most original and forceful. His long life covered the whole of that period that contained the great struggle to set free European thought from the strangle-hold of Authority, a period when the idea of Liberty was in the air and when every country had its champion. It was focused for us by the outbreak of the French Revolution, but that was just a local symptom of a movement that was really universal. France had many stalwarts and their means of expression was literature. Germany and England were also stirred by men of letters to arouse themselves, but in Spain the case was altogether a different one and it required a treatment of its own.

When Goya was born in 1746 the grip of the Inquisition was at its tightest and deadliest, and no sooner had he reached man's estate than he felt the power of it. Due to some youthful folly, he was obliged to steal away from Madrid, worked his way to the coast in the capacity of a bull-fighter, and so arrived at Rome. This action reminds us

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of the saying of the cynical wrong-doer that “The nearer the Police station the further from the Police.” Anyway, the trick succeeded and he remained in Rome some five or six years free from molestation, being even so far honoured as to be allowed to paint the Pope’s portrait.

During his stay in Rome, he, like all students, mixed with young men of many nations, and with them exchanged ideas on the great subject of intellectual liberty that filled all young and ardent minds.

He managed to get into further trouble with the Church authorities by an unsuccessful attempt at abduction from a convent, but he once more escaped the full penalty of his misdemeanour, probably by the exercise of his prodigious personal strength.

In 1775, when he was twenty-nine years old, he returned to Madrid with a reputation for fresh and unacademic painting, and no doubt a black mark against his name upon the books of the Inquisition. A year or two later he began to practise etching, and he came in due course to use this medium almost exclusively for expressing his thoughts, or the more audacious side of them, as we shall presently see.

Goya, Thinker

He was in the habit of producing etchings in groups—a point that will have its weight when we come to an attempt to date his drawings. After three plates of religious subjects he began by producing plates after the works of Velasquez, done with considerable accuracy but strangely lacking in the sense of tranquillity and completeness so noticeable in the originals. It is said that these works were undertaken as a commission from Godoy, and if that is true there is some reason for their emptiness. There were seventeen of these. Next came the well-known group that were issued under the name of “*Los Caprichos*,” and with them begins the curious succession of strangled utterances that were wrung from him at different periods until the end of his life. There were eighty-two *Caprichos*, which brings the total number of etchings up to 102, and they were produced between the years 1793–6, that is to say between his forty-seventh and fiftieth years.

These three years were critical ones in Goya’s personal affairs and equally so in the history of Europe. In the life of the artist the dominating passion was his attachment to the famous Duchess of Alba. He had accompanied her to her country seat on the occasion of her temporary banishment

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from the Court, and it was on the journey that an illness overtook him which had such serious results on his later life.

In their mutual happiness they spent few regrets upon the Queen's decree, but started on the long journey together in the lady's coach, absorbed in the romantic incidents of the way. These were all chronicled in a high-spirited diary of the journey that is preserved in one of Goya's sketch-books.

All went well until in crossing the mountains one of the axles of the coach was bent, at a place far from a blacksmith.

This was where Goya, the man of action, showed his dexterity and resource. He took out the damaged axle, heated it in a fire he built by the roadside, and after enormous exertion managed to straighten it sufficiently to proceed.

But the severity of the weather, acting upon his over-heated frame, caused grave injury, and from this incident began the deafness that gradually closed in upon him and left him before very long stone deaf and shut off almost entirely from human intercourse.

The story of the love affair after this misfortune is not very clear, but it seems that about the time

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of the lady's return to Court, in answer to the Queen's wish, a few months later, there was some estrangement between her and the artist, and this was soon after completed by the death of the Duchess that occurred in the height of her success in the next year. She was just forty when she died.

The absence of written detail in this unfortunate affair has left biographers to wonder whether or no the exuberant Duchess found a deaf lover not to her taste in spite of his fame and his will and ability to perpetuate her delicate beauty. But perpetuate it he did, for besides the many portraits, her graceful figure flits through the pages of the *Caprichos* in unfailing freshness and charm.

We have said above that the *Caprichos* numbered eighty-two prints, but that was not the number in which they were originally issued to subscribers in 1796. That number was eighty, and the two extra unedited plates were added later.

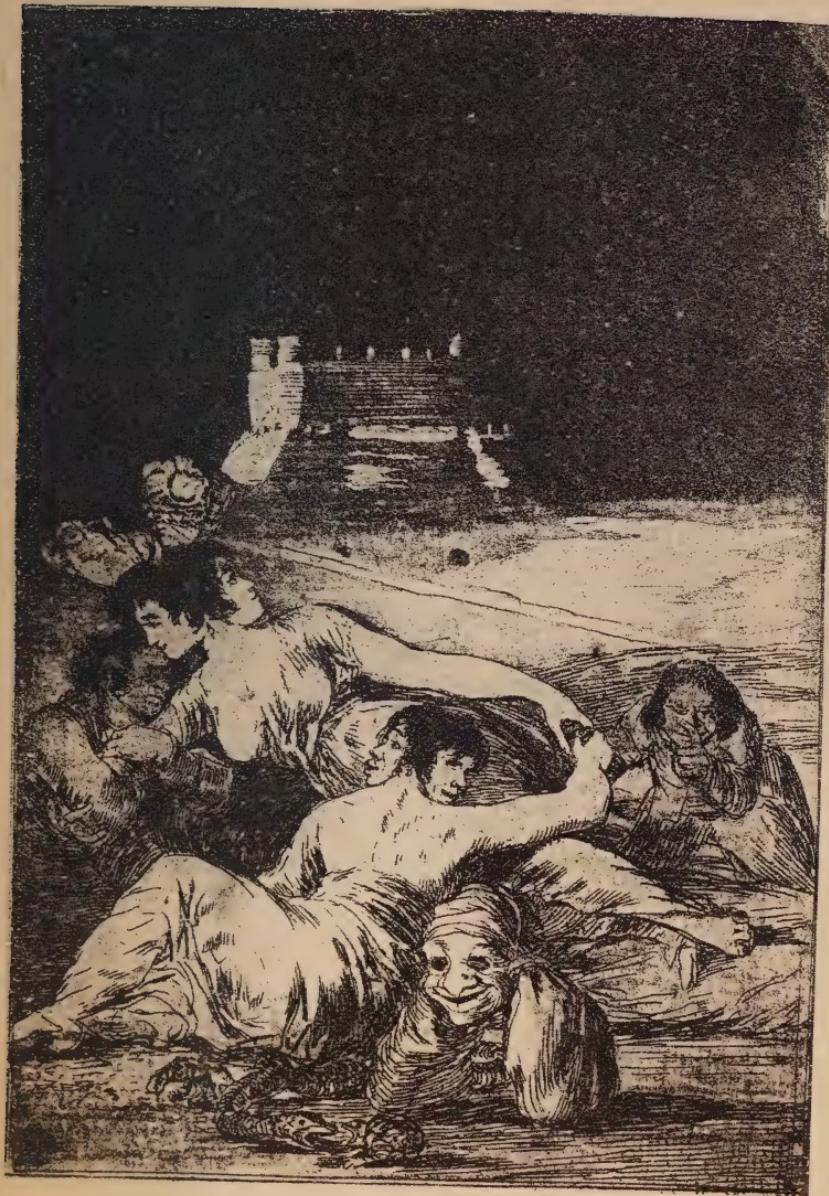
These two contained very intimate references to the intrigue with the Duchess and were intended, one supposes, for her alone. She would know very clearly what they meant, but without the key to the quarrel they have proved wholly incom-

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prehensible to Goya's historians. Goya never gave any explanation of them as he did, or pretended to do, of the others. One of them shows the figure of a man, whom one can readily see is the artist himself, clasping one arm of a woman in whom we recognize as easily the Duchess.

This woman has two faces. She reclines at full length in a transparent robe and presses her lips to the forehead of the man in a careless way. The other face stares upward wearing a false smile. One arm is held by the man, but the other reaches behind her to meet the hand of a repulsive old woman who with a sly wink holds the finger to her nose enjoining secrecy. There is another two-faced woman—a depraved and greedy edition of the Duchess—who also appears to offer endearments. One of her hands seems to be engaged about his person, possibly in picking his pocket, while the other passes the proceeds to the same old woman, who thus would be a gainer by both versions of the lady's character, the intellectual and the debauched.

The fable seems to be repeated in another form in the foreground of the picture, in case the first should be misunderstood, where a kind of money-



UNEDITED CAPRICHOS, No. 2.

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bag looks on with pleasure while a snake threatens to devour a toad—an additional incident thrown in to add venom and meaning to the message. In the background a fortress stands foursquare to the points of the compass, impregnable and stern. It is clumsily divided from the main incidents of the plate by two parallel lines. This may be a hurried contrivance to separate the past from the present, rather unworthy of Goya's usual resource, but clear enough for the purpose, or it may be due to a crease in the paper, for the two plates were printed back to back on one sheet of paper.

It has been given as title "Suens de la mentira y de la inconstancia" (Dream of untruthfulness and inconstancy); but who is responsible for the title it is impossible to say, unless we recognize Goya's handwriting, as some claim to do.

Artistically it is not a success—indeed it makes no claim whatever to be a work of art, since it is only a message or letter—but it is rendered interesting by the extraordinary quality of the drawing that the artist has put into his own portrait, if we may venture to call it so. In it Goya has, as he did sometimes, performed the impossible. He has succeeded in indicating deafness, realized

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the fourth dimension. The whole horror of the tragedy that has overtaken him appears in the drawing—the hopeless, inarticulate misery of the deaf lover who, knowing that he is deceived, still loves. It is probable that, great as he was, and unequalled in the power of delineation of delicate shades of meaning, as we shall have good reason to know later on, he never achieved anything so poignant, so expressive as this head.

The other plate is somewhat damaged. A man, apparently Goya, seated on the ground, holds the wounded paw of a lap-dog that howls because some one has trodden on it. A figure—clearly the Duchess—is distracted with grief at the occurrence. She tears at her hair in the extremity of her anguish. These two figures contain the kernel of the matter. De Beruete says of it, “A scene difficult to explain,” and there he leaves it.

We shall get accustomed to this attitude of powerlessness adopted by the critics and authorities, though as we go on we shall grow less and less able to understand how they can maintain such an attitude and still claim to be intelligent admirers of this great master.

If we consider the two drawings for a moment



UNEDITED CAPRICHOS, No. I

Goya, Thinker

their meaning will be quite clear enough for our purpose, which is to show from the evidence of the plates themselves the state of mind and body in which the artist was when he executed them.

I have described the two drawings in the above order because that is the order in which they appear in the Caprichos. It seems quite clear that this is the wrong order, and that to get their meaning they are to be taken together, with the "Lap-dog" plate first. We might put their meaning in the form of a reproach from the artist addressed to the inconstant lady.

"Listen, faithless one, and I will tell you how you have treated me. When your wretched Fido put his foot under that shapely heel of yours, your distress was terrible to witness. 'Never,' I thought, 'was there a heart so tender, so compassionate. If ever I should meet with a disaster, half its sting would be removed by the sweet ministrations of so kind-hearted a lady.' That was what in my folly I believed. But now that a veritable tragedy has befallen your poor friend, what does he find? He is treated to perfunctory endearments and chilly encouragements. His infirmity is a bore. His attachment may be tolerated

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just so long as it remains a means of gain, for all the pictures and portraits he has given you can they not be turned into cash? It is almost as though you had found profit in his embraces, and had given yourself, like a prostitute, for gold, only instead of trading openly and honestly, you have done it underhandedly and in secret. To think that I should have come to address you thus, you who were once an unassailable fortress, set on high in splendid isolation."

Terrible must have been the artist's wrongs if they justified a reproach so amazing. There is little wonder that they were not included in the original group of the Caprichos.

It is not easy for us to-day to get a true idea of Goya's position in Madrid during the years of his prime. De Beruete, possibly to assist his gallant effort to clear the reputation of "La Alba," endeavours to show the unlikelihood of any liaison between them by emphasizing Goya's humble origin. He calls him a plebeian. Has he overlooked that remarkable drawing which is here reproduced where the history of just such a person as De Beruete would have us accept is set out in all its tragedy? Here we have the various members of an obscure family combining together to

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launch in fashionable life a scion of their humble house. Father and mother, uncles and aunts, all contribute their share. One provides the money that has been so hardly earned, another reads out the rules of genteel behaviour, another sees to the dreadful clothes. The result is a character that Molière might have created and very possibly did. And will the distinguished Spanish critic have us believe that the man who made this drawing moved in a circle that refused to accept him as an equal?

Is it possible that the misfortunes that befell him clouded the artist's vision, and that he painted her in darker colours than were rightly hers? One cannot help hoping so, though at the same time one remembers that in certain of his sonnets Shakespeare speaks of a certain dark lady in terms almost as overwhelming. Still, in the absence of direct evidence, we shall still cling to the belief that her stricken lover had misjudged her, such is the enduring power of her ineffable charm.

By means of these two unedited etchings we have been able to grasp the significance of the date 1793 in the life of Goya. We may now glance at the same period in its effect upon Europe.

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It is crowded with events, but we need only mention a few. It extends from the capture of the Tuileries and the overthrow of the monarchy to the execution of Louis and his unfortunate Queen Marie Antoinette, and in the next few months to the close of the National Convention. It also contains an event of the first importance to the Knights of Intellectual Liberty—the establishment of the Worship of Reason in the Cathedral of Notre Dame. Thus we can see there was plenty of material to supply a thinking man with ideas if he were set on imprisoning some of them in compositions that might or might not be deciphered by his contributors.

So under the stress of personal injury and ill-health, combined with rumours of unheard-of happenings in the neighbouring country, this unique collection of etchings called “*Los Caprichos*” was produced. If they were violent and bitter and scathing and unbalanced can we wonder?

Our purpose is not to analyse these drawings in detail. In passing it is important for us to seize their general character and clearly to understand the circumstances that brought them about. It is well before we leave them to consider their



SELF PORTRAIT OF GOYA, AGED 50



Goya, Thinker

frontispiece—that wonderful profile of the artist in the large Bolivar hat. Mark how the lower lip protrudes misanthropically and gives to the face the suggestion of a man whose thoughts have turned inward and ceased to receive fresh stimulus from outside sources. It is very interesting to compare this sullen face with the well-known portrait that he produced of himself in 1806 or thereabouts some ten years later, when he had just turned sixty.¹

Instead of looking ten years older, he looks at least ten years younger. Disillusionment is gone. Hope and purpose are back again and the soul looks out from its windows again in eager anticipation of the victories that the new century should bring. He seems to have reached a full realization of his extraordinary powers and with that to have thrown off completely the sense of final disaster that the deafness first brought him. Indeed it almost suggests that the isolation and concentration of his life had given him some new and powerful advantage in the exercise of his gifts, defended by his malady, as it were, from the countless distractions and irritations that flow in ceaselessly from

¹ Beruete puts his age at nearly seventy but it seems scarcely credible.

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without to weaken and dissipate the forces that are at work within.

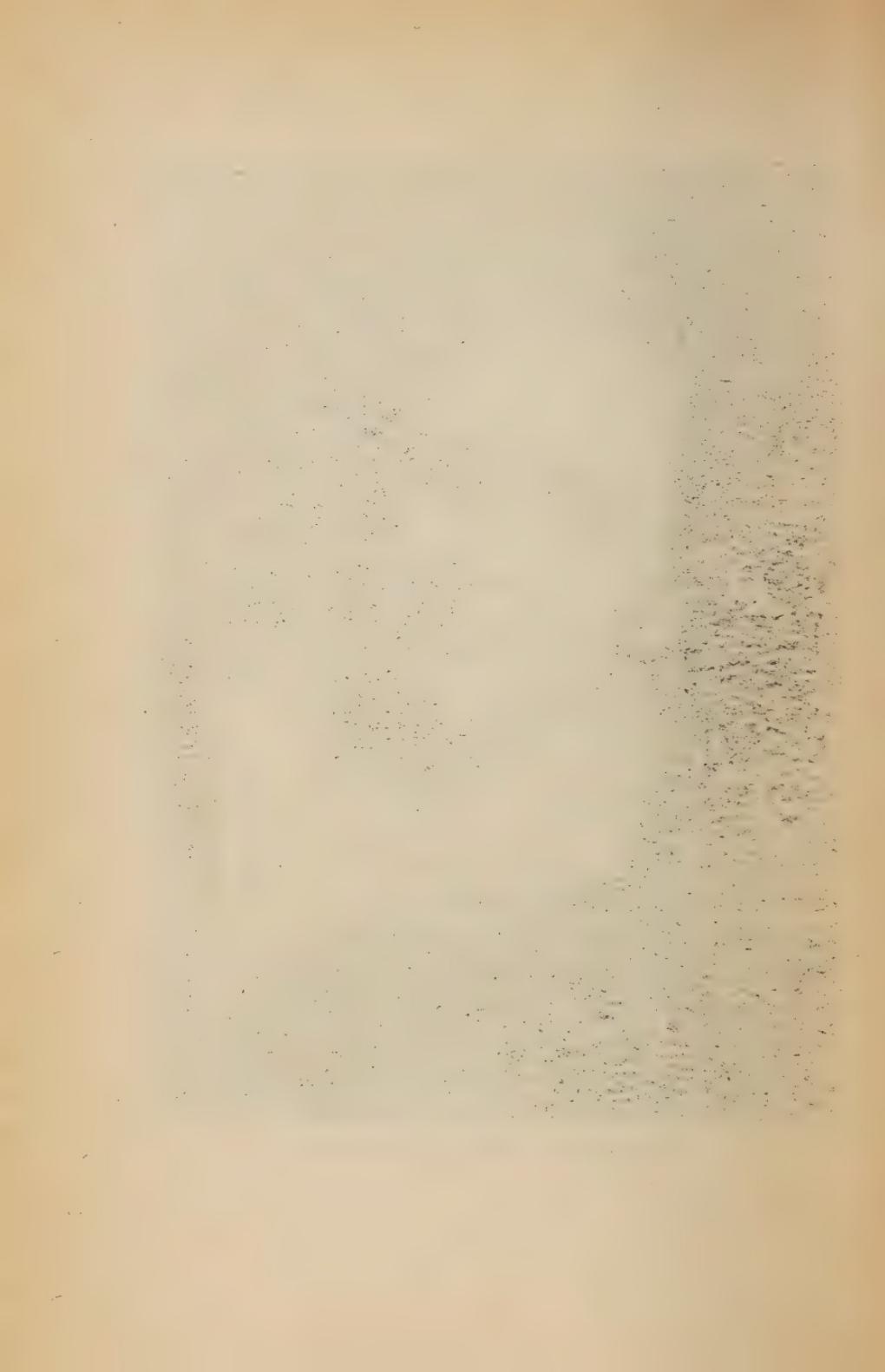
Whether this was the case or not the episode of the Caprichos was left behind and Goya was now a very pronounced success as Court painter and Director of the Academy. He was well and he was happy, so he was in his element once more, using colour in the restrained and accomplished manner characteristic of his best periods and for the moment he did not etch.

Though Beruete, whose sudden death has been such a loss to Goya's admirers, was singularly unfortunate in any attempt he may have made to grasp the artist's meaning in so many of the plates that it had been always fashionable to refer to as obscure, still we must not forget that it was he who first noticed that Goya always took to etching when he was ill. When Goya was well he painted, but when trouble came, colour seemed to become impossible and so he took up the needle.

During the period that followed the death of the Duchess of Alba and the production of the Caprichos we may suppose, if we feel any confidence in the explanation of Beruete, that he did little etching as his health was restored. In our



SELF PORTRAIT OF GOYA, AGED 60-70



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pursuit of that side of Goya's activities which reveals him more clearly as a thinker besides being a great artist, we may therefore pass over the period of renewed health and pass on to the next catastrophe that crippled his powers of using colour and drove him once more to find relief in etching. This period seems to be when the Napoleonic conquest of Spain and the abdication of Charles IV that brought the old *régime* to a standstill, threw the intellectual life of the peninsula into disorder. With the succession of Joseph Bonaparte (Pepe Botelas) in 1808 the national *morale* seems to have broken down and in 1810 Goya was hard at work producing that matchless series of designs that were published under the title of "The Disasters of War." In these we are permitted to gaze upon the spectacle of the Pride of Spain *in extremis*. Adopting an attitude almost of jauntiness he makes the tragic and despairing effort to lighten the weight of the blow that had fallen upon the national prestige—by laughing at it. More mirthless and heart-broken laughter never issued from a suffering nation, and the sound of it echoing and reverberating through the shattered cities went but a little way towards drowning the sobs. Nothing ever ex-

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pressed more forcibly what a real and uncompromising quality is this Spanish pride, a quality that can in its inward agony rend and tear its owners with a ferocity that no wounds from without could effect, with a cruelty that seems to gather up and condense into one monstrous orgy all the blood lust and the pain that the centuries have harvested from the saturated floors of all the bull-rings that may be found between Catalonia and Estremadura. All this and more did Goya with the help of his fertility and resource pour into these pages until they could hold no more. They are packed tight with horrors. Probably no such magnificent effort was ever made to deride its fate by the soul of man.

But in spite of its title it contains a great deal that had nothing whatever to do with War and its disasters, except that the outrages which it exposes and castigates were concurrent with the terrors that the war had brought. Cant and corruption are dealt with again, perhaps with added power, as they were dealt with seventeen years before in the Caprichos. He thundered against the depravity of the Church, its greed, its cruelty and its power to debase and bestialize the ignorant, and he raised the banner of revolt against injustice,

Goya, Thinker

showing in the final plate his belief in the dawn of a new era when the labourer should receive the value and reward of his labour. This note of hope at the end of the collection is characteristic of Goya's power of recuperation.

It will be plain to most readers that this series derives its origin entirely from the nation's suffering, and that there is little trace of any definite ill-health in the artist himself. The soul was sick and not the body. His powers were at their height, and nothing seems to have weakened them in spite of the fact that he was sixty-four when he began and seventy-five when he finished them. "The Disasters of War" contains eighty-two plates, and this brings the total number of etchings produced up to this date to 184.

We now reach the real object of our search, namely, the series of disconcerting and tantalizing etchings that are generally referred to as "Los Proverbios." These strange prints have always exercised a singular attraction for Goya's staunchest supporters. Chronologically they followed the Disasters,—or they may have over-lapped some of them. Beruete speaks of a very serious illness that the artist passed through in the year 1819, when he was seventy-three, and he is inclined to

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date them all from about this year. There are eighteen of them according to some authorities, twenty-two according to others : so that in point of number they would not be too many to expect the master to produce in a year or two.

Professor Rothenstein, too, places them towards the end of Goya's life, basing his judgment upon the larger size of the plates and the quality of the work.

The popular name for them, "Los Proverbios," was not Goya's name. When he spoke of them he called them consistently "Disparates," which means "Nonsense" (Sottises). Another name for them one sometimes comes across is "Suenos"—Dreams. We surmise that the old man's determined way of using the term "disparates" was intended to deter inquisitive people from asking him to explain them, for by this time he was getting irritable and he wished to avoid as far as possible the incessant questioning and surmising with which he had been pestered over the *Caprichos*.

The meanings assigned to these earlier prints, whether they were right or whether they were wrong, were continually getting him into hot water, and he had had enough of it. Such a

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hub bub was caused on one occasion, in earlier years, by the meanings that had been read into them, and by the personalities that small minds insisted upon recognizing in them, that the Inquisition roused itself to take action and it seemed probable that they might go so far as to call on the artist to hand over the plates. At the height of the commotion the King, whether on his own initiative or prompted by the more nimble brain of Godoy, intervened. He ordered Goya to send him the plates he had ordered from him and so saved the artist from an uncomfortable inquiry and who knows what consequences. Remembering these annoyances, and feeling perhaps that under altered conditions he could not rely so confidently upon a Royal intervention in his favour, he said from the first that the new plates meant nothing at all and this statement he adhered to for the rest of his life and no questions or suppositions could draw him to admit anything else.

We think, however, that he was careful to see that prints of them were placed in the hands of connoisseurs and owners of permanent collections, and that he took some pains to ensure that they were likely to be preserved so that in future years

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they would be carefully studied and in due course, as it were, decoded.

Up to the present they have enjoyed a great reputation based solely upon their quality as etchings. One or another has been picked out as the finest plate that Goya ever produced, and this, in view of all that had gone before, is very high praise. Goya's earliest biographers laid down the verdict that this series consisted of "dreams and inexplicable hallucinations" and inexplicable hallucinations they have remained ever since.

How well the writer remembers the first of these etchings he ever saw. It was the splendid design with the elephant that bore the title "Other laws for the people" and it appeared in some French Magazine, *L'Art*, very likely.

It possessed some strangely disturbing quality that took a sudden grip of the mind and would not let go. It seemed to make some insistent demand upon one's faculties, some appeal of unusual urgency. In answer, the accompanying letter-press explained that it was just nonsense, and meant nothing in particular. "Nothing in particular." Some deep conviction that sprang to life in the mind rejected this explanation off-hand. "Something in every particular," was its

Goya, Thinker

much more likely solution, and not only likely but, on the evidence of its appeal, its arrangement, its masses, its momentum or purposeful character and action, absolutely certain. That was many years ago, but the determination was taken at that moment to seize the first opportunity to learn all about this compelling personality, study his work and find out what it was that he meant by pictures such as these. So the intention was formed on the spot, but it was after many journeys about the world that an opportunity at last presented itself to visit Spain, and then in those rather overheated galleries in the Prado acquaintance was at last made with the world's greatest master of the art of expression.

From the examples—quantities of them—of Goya's work in all sorts of chalks and inks and what not that there are on view, one gets some sort of conception of what drawing meant to the master. In his hands it takes quite a different character to what one has learnt to look for from such a man as Leech, let us say. It sheds all its academic qualities, the representational, the mnemonic, the map-like, and such sides of it as are used as a kind of halfway house between the model and the picture. One never sees anything of this

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at all. The tradesmanship of the studio disappears entirely with all its suffocating self-consciousness and pose, and drawing becomes a means of recording ideas, not things. It records so much more than the kind of pattern people make in carrying out a given action. It tells you why they act, and not only why, but he shows you that they could not under their conditions act differently. He shows you the actors and gives you their personal pattern, but gives you also in each case the causes that brought that particular pattern into being—their history in fact.

But we who live in the age of Art Schools must carry the burden that Art Schools lay upon us. To recover the pure graphic sense that Goya had is becoming more and more impossible, because it grew in him from his natural passion for life and the forms that life spread about him in such prodigious profusion. He revelled in the astounding folk that surrounded him, in their shifts, their stratagems, their amusements, their extremities, their vanities, their unrestrained passions and their unconscious honesty.

And because he loved them he recorded them, but his records were not the ones that would have come from one whose vision had been artificially directed by academic stimulant.

Goya, Thinker

His was the real vision of the humanist that comes of the deep understanding that sympathy alone can stir, and the art that he employed was of the vivid sort, unspoilt by schooling, swift and accurate as the pounce of a hawk.

In the work of no other artist did drawing ever take this delicate, flexible quality that Goya shows in these sketches. It seems to approach nearer to some form of picture-writing that was able to overstep the limitations imposed by the necessity of preserving unity of time and unity of event, that is so marked a characteristic of ordinary drawing. Goya recognized no such necessity. For him there were no limitations of what a drawing might express. He could draw sound or silence, taste or smell, evanescent and intangible things that no one ever dreamt of expressing before or since.

Some day it will be given to some fortunate person to produce all these scattered drawings in a splendid volume with a guide to their meanings so that their rare and delicate qualities may not be lost when the power to understand nuances of meaning shall have passed away altogether.

This character of his work is most important to

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our purpose in view of the problem that confronts us, because we find this man who is above all other men capable of giving linear expression to the finest shades of meaning, who has in fact so accustomed himself to doing so that it has become a second nature with him, we find him credited with producing a series of a score of etchings none of which have any meaning at all. Clearly the idea is preposterous. And we say this at the very outset in spite of the fact that all the authorities, the professors, the biographers, the critics, Spanish, French, English, German or what you will, have all categorically declared that they cannot make head or tail of them.

The Goya sanguines and other drawings shew us also another remarkable truth about their author. We find that he went about his etchings in a totally different manner to the way he went about his portraits. No man was ever more rigorous with his sitter. If they sat at all they sat all day. He worked in grim silence on the canvas in monochrome until the characteristic he was aiming at was caught. Once caught he began to work in the colour and so proceeded to the end without remorse and without respite. When he was painting the Duke of Wellington

Goya, Thinker

the story goes that the Duke offered some advice during the progress of the picture. This was unbearable, so the artist seized a sword from the wall and drove his presumptuous sitter from his presence, and it was not until the Iron Duke had offered a complete apology that the sitting was resumed. The full length of Benedict IV that now hangs in the Vatican was painted in a few hours.

With the etchings the procedure was quite different. We find convincing evidence that the subjects he intended to place on copper were drawn in many ways before the final design was adopted. Varying experiments were tried in order to test their expressiveness, and many rejected. These rejects are very instructive and in a particular and difficult instance we shall make use of one of them whereby to test the accuracy of our interpretation.

With regard to the unanimity to treat these plates as devoid of meaning is strange enough in critics with a world-wide reputation for perspicacity and enlightenment when dealing with the work of a man whose strong point is his power to express his meaning. One might explain the occurrence by supposing that possibly they have not spent

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much time in trying to find the meaning out. But the extraordinary attitude they assume towards these drawings in their dictum that their meanings, if they have any, do not concern us, is very difficult to account for, except of course by means of a very obvious retort, which, in the case of authorities of such standing, one cannot bring oneself to employ.

A well-known and scholarly critic says in his very able monograph on Goya—" Whatever Goya meant by the ' Flying Men ' matters little : it is curiously topical to-day." In other words this might be rendered—" We only take a journalistic interest in the work of great artists in these days. What stirred their souls is nothing to us so long as we can find something in it sufficiently curious or topical to amuse us while we are waiting for dinner."

We will now bring our general survey of Goya's life and work to a close and follow him into the house on the outskirts of Madrid where he proposed to end his long life. Quite deaf, he seldom emerged, but when he did he was the object of great curiosity and interest to his fellow-citizens, for his name was honoured for the glory that had come through him to Spain. This house the neighbours called

Goya, Thinker

“Quinta del Sordo.”—“The deaf man’s villa.” He had lived through so many changes and done so thoroughly all that there was to do, that when he retired he had much to think over, and probably he would wish, before he died, to put on record his conclusions as to the many curious anomalies he had remarked in his passage through the world of affairs.

Professor Rothenstein in the Artists’ Library has written : “He was not only the greatest painter of his age in Spain, but also the most fearless and advanced thinker.” This we heartily support, but we are also eager to know what these fearless and advanced thoughts might have been. In this eagerness we believe we have Goya’s sympathy and help. He did not wish to die without placing these thoughts on record. He wished to express them in such a way that they should remain unguessed during his lifetime (and for how long who can say ?), but should come to light in the fulness of time when the world was in a more suitable state of mind to receive them. He may possibly have hoped that when all the beliefs, the organizations, the very foundations of social, industrial and intellectual life were brought to the great melting pot, as they are to-day, his experiences

The Proverbs of Goya

might be found of some help in creating the new system.

So with this plan before him he began a series of etchings which he called "Disparates," and in these he placed his thoughts in a sort of cryptogram, baffling enough to professors and collectors, and other serious-minded people whose great powers would be certainly taken up with more important things like "states" and water-marks and aquatints and so on, but which would be certain in due course, to be penetrated by someone, who, though deficient in scholarship, had retained the obsolescent faculty of recognizing what drawings mean. Such a person would discard the thin disguise given to the series by calling them 'Nonsense,' and, taking them in turn, would point out in a few well-chosen words what they signified, heedless in his simplicity that possibly they "mattered little."

In due course, then, there was born of poor but honest parents and so forth, in accordance with the usual formula, in a village on the Yorkshire wolds—a long, long way from Spain—just the person expected by the great Spaniard. He goes to Spain ; sees the work that he is to do ;

Goya, Thinker

does it ; and this book is the long delayed explanation, almost exactly 100 years after the plates were finished !

And now to our analysis.

DISPARATE NO. I
Disparate de Bestia

Popular title—"OTHER LAWS FOR THE PEOPLE."

AS there is no order that we know of in which to arrange this series of etchings that is based upon an understanding of their meaning, we will therefore take first the one that is best known. It stands out from the others for two reasons—one because it employs a form of notation, if we may use such a term, or system of symbolism that is nearer to common usage than the system employed in the others. It is a recognizable system quite consistently employed right through the drawing, and has apparently offered little difficulty at one time or another to those who set themselves to solve it, because its title admirably condenses its meaning into a proverb or pithy sentence. For this reason we may be tempted to conclude, without sufficient ground very likely, that this was the first plate of the series that Goya produced, and that as its meaning was more or less readily penetrated, and a correct title given to it in the form of a proverb, as a Spaniard can do so aptly, he decided that if his purpose was to be successful he must wrap his thoughts in a more impenetrable

Disparate No. I

garb, and employ in the succeeding plates a more complex code.

This, it will be understood is only a supposition, but whether it is true or no, it receives a certain amount of support from the second attribute that distinguishes it from the rest of the Disparates, except the last—namely, that its title fits it, while the popular titles of the others, where they exist, do not.

As we are to be in constant but friendly disagreement with authority during the interpretation of these Disparates we will in this case commence by quoting at length the analysis of this design given by de Beruete in his great work.

De Beruete is recognized both in Spain and elsewhere as a great authority on Goya, and though we are obliged to differ from him in some cases, we wish to pay to him our respect for the mass of erudition and care he has expended upon his national hero. We offer this translation with every acknowledgment of the insufficiency of our Spanish scholarship.

De Beruete—*Goya Grabador (engraver)*, p. 117.

205. 21. Disparate de Bestia (328 mm.
wide \times 215 mm. high.) Etching and Aquatint. (Lamina 55-2.)

The Proverbs of Goya

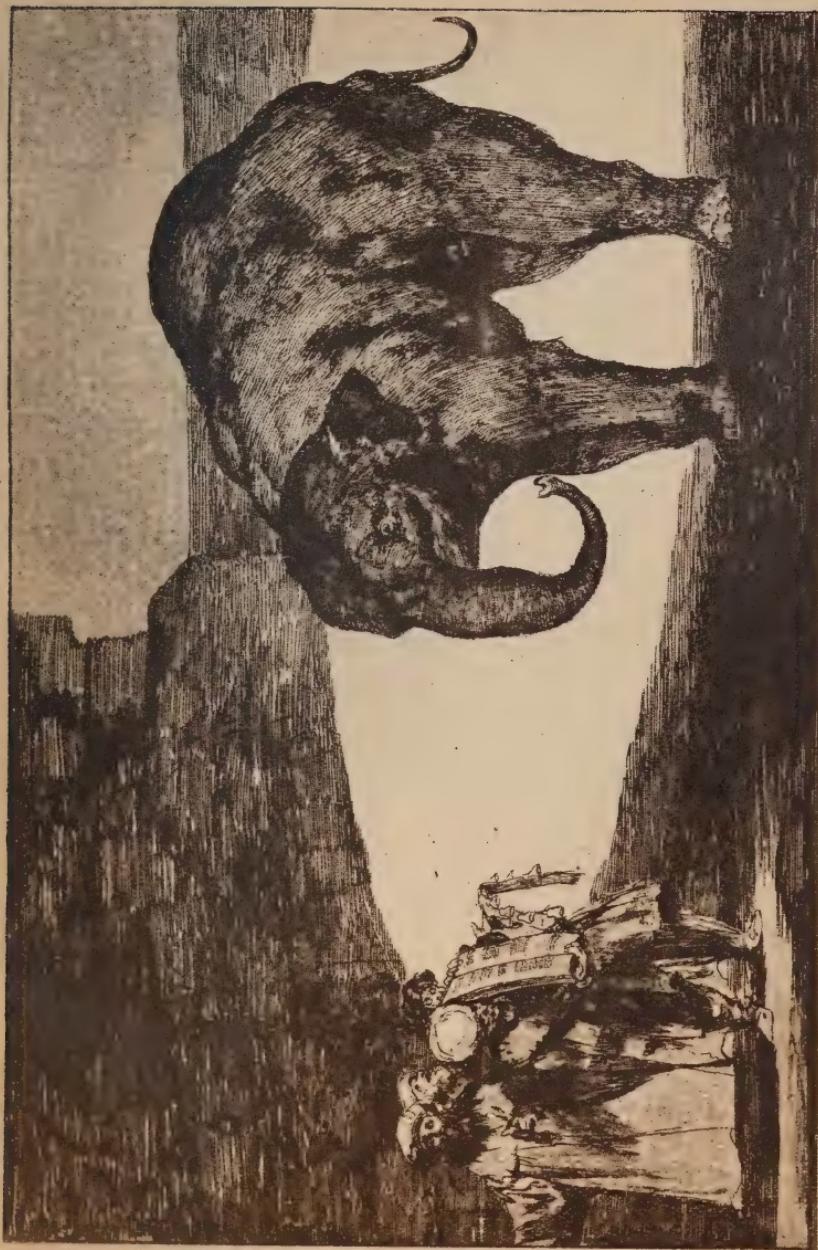
“ In the midst of a scene of a strange nature, which resembles a natural circus, an enormous elephant is halted in front of a group of four personages, who with turbans, wide trousers, and tunics appear to be dressed, one in the Jewish, and the others in the Moorish manner. One of them presents to the elephant a book of laws and another cajoles him by shaking a collar of little bells.

“ I judge this etching to be one of the best of the *Disparates*, full of intention and comprehensible expression, and also of grace and talent.

“ With regard to the elephant, which we would say with much emphasis that it might have been either better or worse designed, or better or worse copied from a real elephant, but that it gives nevertheless a clearer sensation of something enormous, colossal and furious than something that more closely represented such an animal. This monster that halts there may well be the people, tame, humble, unconscious of its fury.

“ The four rascals that from a certain distance admire him, although scared and disposed to make off if the enormous trunk threatens them, may be the keepers of the elephant—legislators and politicians, who with a frenzy of cowardice and

DISPARATE, I



Disparate No. I

cunning try to convince him of the excellence of the laws that they present to him."

This is an excellent example of the exalted method of inquiry, that avoids a too close dissection in the first place and a too definite conclusion in the second. It is admirable in some directions of criticism, but in explaining these particular etchings it is fatal. It is in fact the very quality of connoisseurship that Goya relied on to keep his secret.

These drawings will not respond to this cursory treatment. They require a close and searching analysis of quite a different kind.

In passing we could draw attention to the significant phrase "full of intention and comprehensible expression." It is unexpected from so high an authority because it is so very human.

After all we can only recognize intention when we are aware of its purpose and expression, when we understand it.

We now submit our own analysis.

An elephant that has had its tusks removed, its teeth drawn, its masculinity modified, and its food rations much reduced, stands *just outside* a restricted circus-like area, well-defined and well-trodden, but whose boundary, save in a place or

The Proverbs of Goya

two, is quite arbitrary. The surroundings of the area are of a most depressing and unenjoyable character, treeless, barren and monotonous. A settled gloom covers it. The elephant glares upon a group of elders dressed to look like Eastern rabbis or law-givers who stand in the sunlight well away from the gloomy area. One holds up a large book open at the Decalogue, another offers him a girdle hung with bells, a third is on the point of slipping away from danger, while the fourth invokes help from above. They all betray their anxiety at the elephant's unusual behaviour, and at the failure of the usual blandishments to quiet him.

It may be best translated by means of a dialogue that the drawing suggests between Demos and the Elders.

THE ELDERS. It is with the deepest concern that we find you outside the limits we have marked out for you with such care and solicitude. We beg of you at once to return to the ways of your ancestors, that you have left so unaccountably, otherwise we shall not be able to hold ourselves responsible for what may happen to you. Go back at once, like a good Demos, and stay there.

DEMOS. Why don't you stay there yourselves ?

Disparate No. I

The **ELDERS.** For us it is different. Our duty takes us into paths it would be dangerous for you to tread who have neither our education nor rectitude. Come, be advised by us. See here are the rules of life all drawn up for your guidance. They were made by great and good men thousands of years ago, some of them by Moses. You no doubt remember Moses ?

DEMOS. What have I to do with Moses ?

The **ELDERS.** Nay, hush ! If you are a good Demos you shall wear the pretty bells that will tinkle, tinkle through all Eternity.

DEMOS. Go ring your bells in Hell. You and your laws ! See what your laws have done to me ! Once I was a lusty, comfortable and effective animal with a will of my own and the free use of my unimpaired faculties. But look at me now ! I've had enough of being cooped up here at your bidding, while you, you canting impostors, consider yourselves above all laws, and free to enjoy yourselves as much as you like. Before very long I shall be making my own laws, and when I do I shall make a point of seeing that you obey them.

You have had fair warning ! Beware !

This plate possesses a peculiarity that is very

The Proverbs of Goya

uncommon in Goya's work. It shows evidence that he made a false start. Towards the top left-hand portion of the design, where the heavy lines denote the dark overhanging rocks that keep the sun from shining on the circumscribed area, we can trace quite clearly the outline of an elephant. It is much more foreshortened than the one he completed, and it is quite likely that a sepia drawing is in existence with the elephant on the left of the picture instead of the right, and the elders occupying the position now used by the elephant. In the foreshortened position we believe that he found a difficulty in showing the various signs of ill-treatment that he wished the animal to exhibit and so turned it sideways.

DISPARATE NO. 2
Disparate Feminino

AFTER the political tendency of the first design we now enter upon social problems, and in this and the two following proverbs we examine the destiny of young womanhood. Here we have the life story of a girl who marries early and undergoes life's stern discipline, in the normal way. It is generally catalogued as "Six women blanketing a dead ass," and probably in consequence of this summary description of it, Goya's commentators have failed to penetrate its thinly veiled meaning. The stumbling-block is this hasty enumeration of "Six Women," in the manner of a short-sighted clerk who is drawing up a sale-room catalogue in a hurry. There are certainly six female figures in the drawing, but it needs no very deep insight to see that they are all one and the same woman. It is usual to remark that they are dressed as majas, that is to say that from Goya's point of view the woman in question represents the most advanced type of the day. She has discarded the traditional abundance of petticoat and skirt and permits herself freedom both of body and mind. See her in the gay confidence of youth standing upon the left of

The Proverbs of Goya

the picture, and picking up her task in life with happy insouciance. "Why should marriage be made such a nightmare?" she seems to say. "Everything depends upon how you manage the man. Begin as you mean to go on. He is not such a brute as he seems, but will respond to a woman's lighter thought." So she confidently enters the first phase of married life. On her left we see her again after a year or two of experience has passed over her. She is now the young matron. Tired? No, not exactly tired but a little wistful perhaps. The lines of youth are gone and youth's buoyancy, but there is still the will to happiness if only it were possible. In the next stage she has clearly reached resignation, so we may judge that the struggle to lift the grosser mentality of her lord is over. Only duty now and a consideration for appearances keeps her at her post. The fourth stage is only hinted at. From what we can see of her she appears to be much overloaded and whether from blows or from indulgence she appears to stagger at her task.

The fifth stage is very carefully portrayed and is terrible in its directness. All charm is gone and we have now to do with a brazen virago. Her duties are perfunctory and as she nears the turning

DISPARATE, 2



Disparate No. 2

point of life she decks herself out in garments that are conspicuous and unsuitable. She pays no regard any more to appearances and takes such low pleasures as come in her way. In the last stage, with a backward glance down the vista of the wasted years—(one of Goya's inimitable touches)—she sets her burden down, a broken hopeless woman. So ends the tale that began so happily.

Now as to the content of the blanket that proves such an intolerable load to the wife, we find therein besides the ass a nude figure of a man, obese and prone. These two gross symbols indicate characteristics of the sterner sex with which we are well acquainted. Habitual sensuality lies side by side with masculine stupidity—the stupidity that is part of the male attitude, a slowness or ponderosity of the mind that is a perpetual affront to the mental agility of woman.

But the sustained efforts to overcome the inertia of the grosser sex, though they fail to accomplish the object in view, have, however, results of a kind. Two puppets are lifted from the sagging mass to attain an appearance of gaiety overhead. But it is only an appearance. The masculine character reacts only in parlour tricks, superficial graces that have no real relation to his inner nature. The

The Proverbs of Goya

puppets, by their antics indicate the nature of man's response to the "lighter touch." The first spreads his hand in the gesture of one who pays a gross compliment or retails a ribald story, and the second overacts the part of a mountebank when he is expected to conduct himself as a cultured member of society. So now we may read Goya's message in words something like these :

" How vainly does the natural vivacity and charm of woman strive to lift the inertia of the world's grossness and stupidity. If men respond at all to these efforts it is not their true selves that do so. They are playful only as puppets are playful. The fundamental bestiality of their nature is untouched. This sagging weight of the unconscious ass in man, and the still more intolerable burden of his drunken stupor, wears out in time the delicate fibre of her nature that she brings to the task in her happy inexperience. When she has seen through the sham ideals of her mate and realized his leaden and sordid outlook she drops beneath the disillusionment, and does well if she sinks not to his level."

There is something in this grim picture of married life that recalls Tennyson's lines—

DISPARATE, 2 (ii)



Disparate No. 2

"As the husband is the wife is; thou art mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature shall have weight to drag thee
down."

There is a drawing reproduced here that Goya made as a first idea of this rendering of woman and marriage. It shows four phases only of a woman's married life, the phases that are numbered one, two, five and six in the etching. Experienced married women are shown who are amused to see the gay confidence of the young wife. They remember their own beginnings and the bitterness of their experiences.

A word is due to the nature of the device that Goya used in this drawing for compressing into one design a long series of events that cover many years. It is something akin to the way in which the Primitives, both European and Oriental, compressed a whole life story into one picture. The device is so unexpected in a Spaniard of the nineteenth century that in using it the artist must have felt that if the design of the Elephant was too easy to read, this at any rate would baffle his critics. How right he proved the years have shown.

DISPARATE NO. 3

Disparate Puntual

THE design known as "The Circus Queen" enters more fully into the life and aspirations of the Majas of Goya's day, and tells us something of the kind of criticism to which they were subjected by the more conservative members of both sexes.

The Maja is seen in this drawing in a very precarious attitude, but with fine courage and unconcern she is keeping her position with a good deal of difficulty upon the back of a horse that offers her very insecure foothold. Her contortions, graceful though they are, show that her position is one to which she has not yet grown accustomed. The horse in its turn is squarely and comfortably balanced upon a thin rope whose supports we have to take on trust, for we cannot see them. Of the two equilibrists, the lady and the horse, the latter appears far more at home in its unstable position than its rider does on hers. The quiet well-trained beast seems quite undisturbed by the novel antics of its charming rider. Both horse and rider are in a strong light. Behind them we can detect in the gloom a crowd of people who watch the lady and her horse with signs of



DISPARATE, 3

Disparate No. 3

ill-natured amusement. This crowd has always received special mention from critics for the manner in which it is suggested even though those critics had no idea of the significance of the composition. The darkness in which they huddle together is the darkness of social immaturity, a survival of unwholesome ways of life and unworthy standpoints. They wear the traditionally voluminous dresses and live lives of inaction and seclusion in distinction to the innovations of the more emancipated woman on the horse. The horse is a symbol, used we believe before Goya's day, for the natural passions. These passions are balanced upon a thin line of convention that leads from the past to the future. Its supports are hidden in the remote history of mankind and we must take them on trust, for we know very little about them—all we can say is that they appear quite adequate. So the design might be called "The New Woman" and may be thus described.

Here is the spectacle of charming and unconventional womanhood, solitary and conspicuous, but gallantly unconscious of the fierce glare of publicity. With her passions under perfect control she keeps her hazardous poise upon the thin line of convention that seems almost too slender to

The Proverbs of Goya

support the strain that is put upon it. Will she be able to hold her position to the end? The world, that has not the courage to emerge from the sham conventions and the make-believe respectability that are stifling it, thinks that she will not. They are almost too bored to care, but it amuses the cynics to await the fall that they declare must surely come.

DISPARATE NO. 4

HERE the horse appears again once more symbolizing the passions, but it is not the well-trained manageable horse of the previous design. This is a savage unbridled beast that seizes a woman's nightdress in its teeth in the act of carrying her away to some hopeless and desolate land. The woman is of a homely unattractive type of mature years. We see from her ringless hands that she is unmarried. She is well developed and perfectly fitted to have children and we conclude that her passions, naturally strong, have been frustrated until the strain had become more than she could bear. So when her passions seize her in their baffled fury she makes no struggle whatever to save herself.

Apparently there was one alternative that she might have chosen which would have saved her from the savage revenges of her thwarted nature. Not far away are two monstrous sloths gorged and sleepy. She might have presented herself at the mouth of one of these insatiable vermin to be in turn swallowed, a willing victim to the inhuman logic of a senseless creed.

These repulsive brutes, mangy and evil in their

The Proverbs of Goya

hateful repose, are the symbols of Goya's conception of the whole Conventional System as he knew it. He could see only one of these two horrible alternatives—the horse or the sloth—as the fate of the unmarried woman. That he felt it deeply and longed to set it right is clear enough from the way in which he has presented it, for we know of no design in the whole range of graphic art that utters so terrible an indictment as this does ; that expresses a human outcry so poignantly or so clearly. Later on we shall see more particularly the conditions under which the willing victim enters the mouth of the sloth, when we come to the design of the woman with two heads. The Problem of the unmarried woman can be summed up as follows :—

What can be said of a social system that offers to unmarried woman the choice between two terrible alternatives ? In the heyday of her life, when her natural passions are strong and insistent, she must either give way to them completely and live a life of unbridled debauchery, or she must enter a claustral life and waste the best years of her life in the endless repetition of a series of meaningless acts. Surely there is some other course that a woman might follow and still keep her self-respect !

DISPARATE, 4



DISPARATES NOS. 5 AND 6

The Flying Men and Five Bulls

THERE are five flying men. One of them is detailed for us with great care and in order that we may know the type of man we are dealing with. He is a muscular, fearless, clean-living man, with strong resolute features, determined mouth and well-shaped intellectual head. He represents the higher development of humanity that Goya knew. The figures are lit, as it were by a distant sun, and they direct their courses in different directions towards the unknown, each completely independent of the others, though they are all fired by the same enthusiasm for discovery. The wings are controlled by the contraction and extension of the men's bodies alone, and not by any extraneous device or auxiliary power. The head of an eagle forms a kind of head dress. Lefort is always quoted in regard to his pronouncement upon this etching. It must be remembered that he speaks as a collector with a wide knowledge of etchings, but that he had not the remotest idea what it meant.

"Never has Goya's needle revealed itself more

The Proverbs of Goya

lightly and spiritually than in this work, nowhere else does it show itself more knowledgeable. The design is truly superb, and it is, in our opinion, not only the best of this series, but also one of the most beautiful of the artist's productions. In support of this opinion we are willing to place it beside "Le Garroté" and the three etchings of "The Prisoners," which it equals by the perfection of its modelling, by the justness of its movement and by the hardy grace of its execution." (P. Lefort, *Goya*, p. 88-89.)

It is a long time since we first met with this estimate of the Flying Men, but we must confess to a feeling of wonder every time it turns up. We find it so difficult to get exactly the point of view of a man who can look at a work simply and solely as an engraving without regard to its meaning or its composition.

The "Five Bulls" has proved something of a stumblingblock for compilers and critics. Because there are bulls in it they have without hesitation classed it as a print from the Tauromaquia series, that has gone astray. Beruete, however, as we might have expected, has discomfited this misdirected zeal for uniformity, by placing it in the Disparates, but without recognizing its relation



DISPARATE, 5

Disparates Nos. 5 and 6

to the "Flying Men." In France they call it
"The rain of Bulls."

Through a blackness, as of the pit, five strained and helpless bulls from unknown heights fall headlong into unknown depths. We can see only two complete heads out of the five. The topmost head has brought out Goya's unique power of expression in a masterly way. Without descending to a humanistic rendering, as a lesser man might have done, he has succeeded in fixing upon it a clear-cut and unmistakable life-history without losing anything of its bovine character. We recognize the ultimate stages of unbridled desire, when sensation has almost entirely ceased, and appetite alone remains. A state almost of coma, through which there flickers faint indications of the survival of the one over-mastering idea, though accomplishment is now only a memory. This bull's head may be classed among the most wonderful exercises in impression that this master's hand ever achieved. The other head is the head one sees so often in the bull-ring, and it signifies ferocity and destructiveness, and all the baser instincts of unregeneracy.

Taken by itself the plate does not offer us any great encouragement to treat it as a symbolical

The Proverbs of Goya

composition, but taken in conjunction with the "Flying Men" we realize at once that in this pair of drawings we have a weighty pronouncement upon the possibilities of human life, given with all the force of the artist's unconquerable optimism.

Because he employs the well-known device, common to hymnal companions and such compositions, of identifying the higher life with an upward motion towards the skies, and the lower life by a motion in the opposite direction, we must not attach any hackneyed religious meaning to the plates. They are purposely non-religious. The wings of the spirit owe nothing to the unwholesome practice of constant religious stimulant. They draw their power from man himself who relies solely upon his own efforts to free himself from the disabilities of his origin, and rise to higher things.

Those readers who are accustomed to consider questions of design will realize that it would have been a much simpler matter to make an attractive pattern out of the wings if they had all been going in the same direction, as for instance it would occur in a group of homing herons, and that he would never have made this great decorative sacrifice unless there had been some very strong reason for doing so. This consideration shows

DISPARATE, 6



Disparates Nos. 5 and 6

us what a weighty emphasis underlies the arrangement he has adopted. He stresses individual effort as opposed to mass effort which would have been the inference of the alternative arrangement. He seems to have been influenced by a deep mistrust of concerted or congregational emotionalism, the same mischievous spirit that squanders spiritual energy in obtaining sensational conversions in our own day : results that entail aftermaths of apathy and despair. Spiritual independence leading to a fearless unfolding of the wings of the spirit will take us higher and further, he tells us, than the soul-destroying practice of spiritual dram-drinking, that embarks its adherents upon the usual vicious circle.

We have taken rather a perverse pleasure in distilling its meaning from the " Flying Men " and shewing the wide reach of its intention and its splendid faith in the destiny of the human race, as this is the plate whose meaning we have been told " matters little." Taken in conjunction with its companion we believe that the following is a fair interpretation of its meaning :—

What boundary can we place upon the sweep of the human spirit ? It may spread its wings towards new worlds of truth and beauty, or it may sink

The Proverbs of Goya

lower than the brute, dragged down by the weight of its infinite capacity for evil. It may soar above the eagle or compete in degradation with the beasts.

The capacity for either is within man, and he alone can choose his course and direct his destiny.



DISPARATE, 7

DISPARATE NO. 7

Two groups of people in sacks

THIS plate cannot be regarded as a success,— and owing to its hurried treatment and the limited characterization of the individuals it can only be interpreted in comparatively general terms.

Under a sky of unbroken darkness two groups of men stand, each about its leader. They are completely unconscious that they are enveloped in sacks that impede the action of their limbs. The figures stand in shadow and one member of each group makes an attempt to break away from his fellows. He takes a few steps towards the light, but owing to the manner in which he is enveloped soon stumbles and falls. A little of the character of the nearest group can be made out and we have no difficulty in picking out the self-important leader who looks towards the light with an air of haughty disapproval. He is a tall, elderly man with white locks, prominent nose and deficient cerebral capacity. He has the characteristics of the fluent speaker. The others lean on him for support, showing in their faces abject docility under his leadership, either assumed or real. They keep their faces turned towards

The Proverbs of Goya

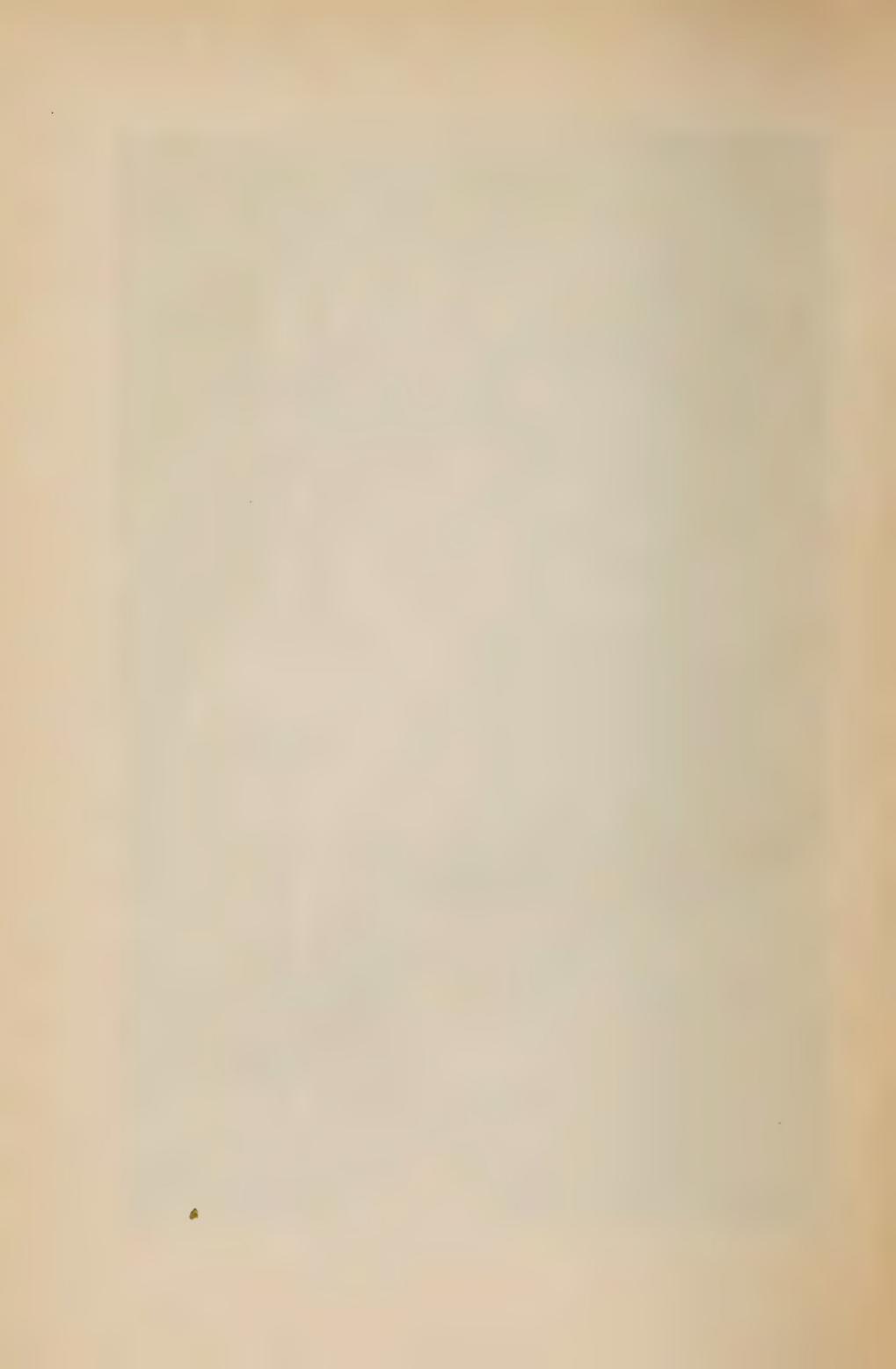
darkness. We should expect to find in the appearance of the individual who tries to leave this unenlightened group some evidence that he is of a higher intellectual standing ; but we have never had the good fortune to see a proof or copy of the plate clear enough to determine this point with any certainty.

It presents, so far as it goes, little difficulty in interpretation.

Men are strangely unaware that they enjoy little or nothing of intellectual freedom. On all important questions they divide themselves into two groups, and the fact that they do not agree with the opposition fosters in them the belief that they are very independent. They never like to think for themselves, but elect a leader who is to do their thinking for them. Occasionally one of them realizes the limitations of his intellectual horizon and determines to strike out for himself, towards the light, but the trammels of custom have so enfeebled his powers that he soon comes to grief and becomes an object of derision among his party.

DISPARATE, 8





The Dancers

THIS is a sad picture that ridicules a common foible of human nature. We shall not dwell long upon it, as it serves little purpose to point out to elderly people that their place in life is by the chimney corner.

Three old men and three old women are joined in an extravagant dance, keeping time with castanets. The sun is setting behind them. Their joints are stiff and their actions are ungainly, but they do their best to appear uproariously happy. But how tired they are, poor things! They are all made up to give the appearance of exuberant youth. The men wear wigs and stuff out their clothes with cushions to simulate the lusty incontinence of callow boyhood. The women also wear pads beneath their corsets, and rebuild as far as possible their ruined figures. We can hear their cracked voices :

“ Surely you see how gay we are? Only the gayest people are capable of such boisterous merriment.”

There, that will do.

We print here a reduced facsimile of the sepia

The Proverbs of Goya

drawing which is at the Prado in Madrid. We do so for several reasons. It will be noticed how absolutely identical the hurried brush drawing is to the finished plate. It is not even reversed, but right is right, and left is still left. This means that Goya, having made the hurried note of the composition, reversed it by some means in the process of conveying its composition to the plate. This could have been done by a tracing, but his drawings never show any signs of having been traced. It could also have been done by propping the drawing up with its face towards the window, and copying the back of it on to the copper. This was probably his method, and the point we wish to make is that he had the gift of copying with unerring exactitude any drawing that he had previously made. Almost the whole of the designs he made for the "Disasters of War" are in existence, drawn in red chalk, and these can be compared with the etchings. The faithfulness is almost unbelievable. In this case he had to do, not with a line drawing, but a wash drawing, and we can observe the complete ease with which the faint suggestiveness of the manipulated wash is transposed into its linear equivalent. Faint and impressionistic as the wash drawing is, it seems to contain everything that

DISPARATE, 8 (ii)



Disparate No. 8

the completed etching contains. He might almost have been copying a finished work so entirely has he succeeded in expressing his idea at the first stroke. This faculty of completing a complicated composition—and there are many examples—in his mind before he made a mark on paper belongs to Goya *par excellence*. He did it unconsciously, unerringly. Beautiful designs sprang full-grown and complete in every corner straight from his inward eye to the paper. If he altered it, it was not because he failed to set it down in the first attempt, but because he had altered his idea. There was never any bungling or correction. The correlation between eye, brain, and hand was perfect.

DISPARATES NOS. 9 AND 10

Disparate Claro

WE have arrived at the ninth plate and so far the authorities have only been allowed one opportunity of expressing themselves. This one is so filled with difficulties and has so successfully set all elucidators at defiance, that it is fair that de Beruete shall be heard, especially as he has more than usual to say.

De Beruete—*Goya Grabador*, p. 114.

199. 15. *Disparate claro* (322 mm. wide × 209 mm. high). Etching and aquatint (Lamina 53-2).

“Upon a platform which occupies two-thirds of the composition there is a numerous group of monks, women, and members of the faithful. One of these personages, whom we cannot clearly distinguish as a priest or a woman, points to the mouth of an abyss into which falls a soldier, but from whence one cannot tell. In the background different men, mounted one on another, hold up an enormous piece of cloth that covers the great part of this group.”

The above description is of one of the prints

Disparates Nos. 9 and 10

that were taken of this etching in 1864. There exist, however, earlier proofs with certain variations. Lefort describes them, and Von Loga informs us of one that belongs to Herr Hoffman in Vienna. Will this be one of those that Lefort has? In neither of these two is there the figure of the soldier, but in place of it luminous rays, flames and smoke which leap from the cavern. Another column of smoke occupies the place of the personages in this definite "state" of the copper. Other less important points, though still variations, especially in the figure of the man kneeling that is on the right of the composition. With regard to this, according to the references given, there exist three states of this etching: the first, which we have already described and which seems to be the only proof in existence, I have been able to reproduce: the second much like the first with light touches of aquatint added. This proof according to Lefort (for I don't know it myself) shows in Goya's hand the number 7 and the legend "Disparate claro."

The third is the one reproduced in the edition of the Academy. From all this the etching appears to me to belong evidently to the series we have mentioned elsewhere (thirteen of them on Senor Vindel's authority of which seven have reading

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on them) of a set of proofs pulled expressly and solely by Goya himself ; and which have served as the principal foundation for naming the series " *Les Disparates*. " Lefort holds no authority for talking of this change, therefore I say that I have no knowledge of more reading than what there is on this proof.

" This work, whose technique is sufficiently heavy and monotonous and whose meaning seems to be incomprehensible, supplies us with cause for stating once more, that in effect, these plates have lost a great deal with touches after Goya's time, but which, with a few exceptions, may be generally taken to be always careless in their draughtsmanship and in their technique monotonous and hard, with few shadings and delicacies. It shows us that this ' *Disparate claro*, ' earlier proofs of which we know to have been retouched by another hand than the author's, although they had been retouched since that ' state ' by Goya himself, and which first state does not allow of its being definite enough.

Something of the same kind occurs when we refer to the movements and the expression. How is it possible that this group so expressive and so precise should be the same, should be identical, before the flames were thought of which leap

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from the abyss, as it is before the appearance of the soldier who throws himself into the pit?"

Thus Beruete.

Here we have an honest man doing his level best to make an omelette without eggs. His distress is made clear to us in that last appeal—"How is it possible?" Obviously it is not possible at all, and what Lefort says or what Lefort doesn't say is of no manner of use to us, if we have failed in the very first essential, namely to understand what Goya says. It is just this very failure that makes it possible for these two experts to confuse two separate designs with two "states." But they are obsessed with "states" and titles, and befogged by Goya's scribbled comments that were put there for the very purpose of befogging them.

In this case "Disparate claro" is a good title enough, but not in the sense in which these good people understand it. It means "Manifest nonsense,"—not Goya's work that is nonsense but the evil that he exposes. The title is thus something of a play upon words, whereby he at the same time tells the truth and confounds the wise, a position so dear to his heart that he cannot resist occupying it when a chance arises.

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We do not intend to go through the above comments of Beruete in their entirety : there is only the one phrase that draws our fire where he complains of "careless draughtsmanship" in this and other plates. He refers to the way in which "the soldier" and "the figure of the man kneeling that is on the right of the composition" are drawn, and he is not alone in speaking in this manner of some of the great Spaniard's work. Does it never occur to these critics that it may possibly be themselves that are at fault and not Goya ? Their belief in his genius ought to have saved them from this amazing blunder, for surely they know enough of him to be quite certain that Goya does not draw real soldiers like that, nor "kneeling men" either.

We shall now cease belabouring the critics and enter upon the task of analysis along our usual line, after which all things shall be made clear. It is a most amusing piece of satire.

DISPARATE NO. 9

A group of people occupy a raised platform that is approached by a bridge over a gulf. Flames and smoke issue from the gulf. Between the plat-



DISPARATE, 9

Disparates Nos. 9 and 10

form and the bridge hangs a great curtain or veil, and certain members of the group are engaged in holding up the edge of the veil. They are not tall enough to do so easily, but by standing on one another's shoulders they are able to admit a faint light. In the obscurity that prevails behind the veil identification is as difficult for us as it is for the occupants of the platform. We are aware, however, that something very marvellous is going on. From the lack of interest taken by most of the group we judge that this is not the first time it has occurred. Now as to the actors in this strange scene. The central figure is a terrible looking ruffian, who with open mouth utters mystic words. One hand points aloft and the other to the gulf. In passing we note that though his face is dark, his hands are white. He is dressed in the voluminous robes of the dignitary who presides over ceremonies such as these. Close to this chief actor, and just visible over his right arm, we can distinguish the round bald head of a puzzled portly citizen who is trying to look both ways at once in obedience to the pointing hands.

He is surrounded and almost smothered by a phalanx of five more rogues who are dressed in

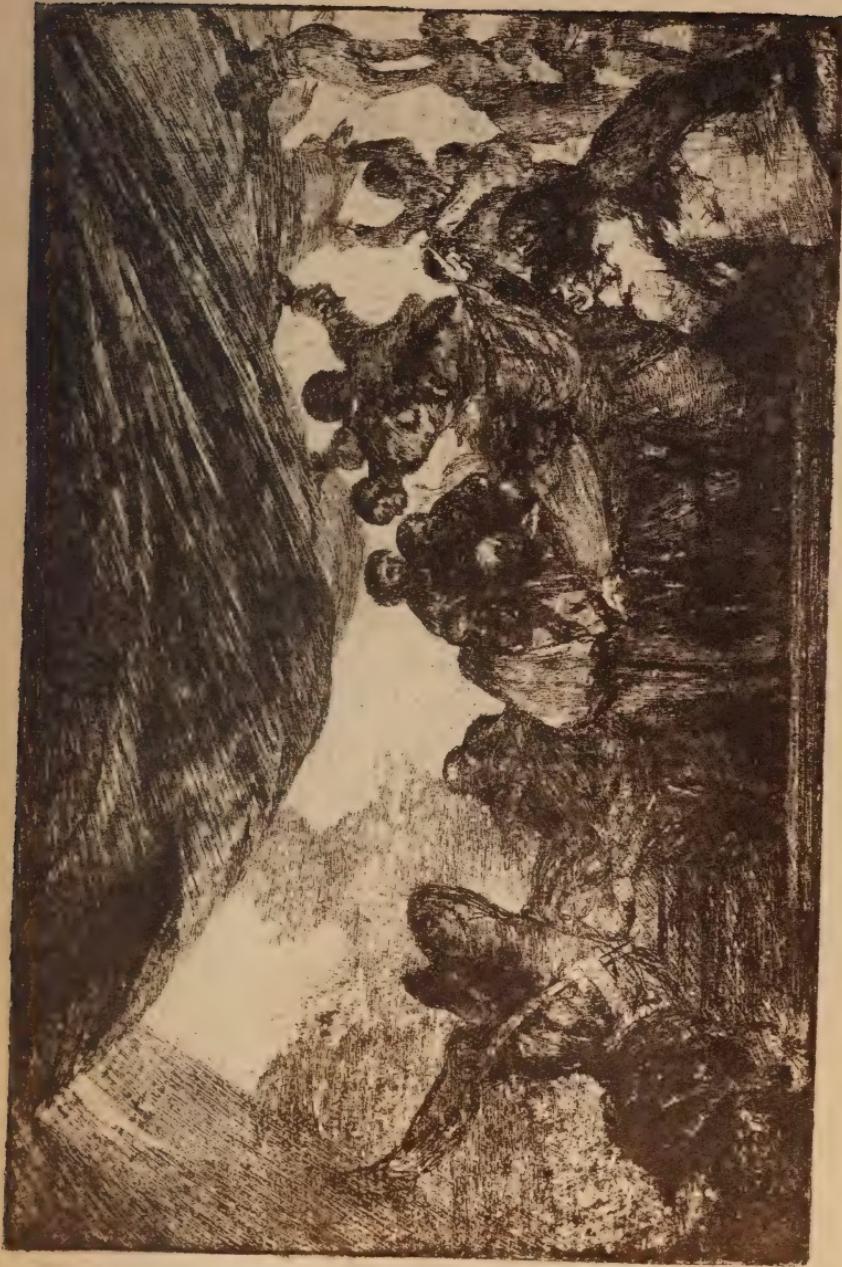
The Proverbs of Goya

much the same kind of garments as those worn by the arch-rogue. They are pretending to take great interest in the manifestation, but in reality they are crowding the visitor for the purpose of preventing him seeing anything that may be going on behind him. Their expression, where visible, is one of low cunning and deception. A great black man stands over the harassed visitor with a hand ready to coerce him should he betray undue interest in anything but what he is allowed to see. Right in front of the picture is a dummy figure of a man dressed in an ill-fitting civilian coat. This dummy is propped up by a stick in a kneeling position, and in the bad light might very well pass for a deeply interested spectator. At the back of the crowding conspirators on the platform, almost lost in the smoke, can be traced the form of yet another confederate whose business will be apparent directly.

DISPARATE No. 10

This etching was made from the same plate as No. 9 after certain important alterations had been made. It saved the trouble of drawing the greater part of the composition over again. It represents the denouement of the thrilling

DISPARATE, 10



Disparates Nos. 9 and 10

manifestation that was expected in the previous etching.

The arch-rogue still points and roars the mystic formula. The attendants still try to lift the veil. The confederates still keep their watch upon the deluded citizen. Over their heads has been hurled the dummy figure of a soldier who thus appears for a moment before the startled eyes of the citizen to disappear quickly under the platform. Materialization has occurred ! The citizen has seen his dead soldier son, and all he has to do is to pay over his money and depart. Wonderful !

Thus are we weak mortals permitted to pass
BEHIND THE VEIL !

There are a few points which the above analysis does not bring out which are worth observing. There are two dummies, a soldier and a civilian, and these seem a sufficient stock-in-trade to run this fraudulent concern. There is apparently more demand for the soldier than the civilian because the late war has left so many bereaved relatives. For this reason, owing to its many damaging journeys under the platform, it is more dilapidated than its civilian companion. The confederate whose duty it was at the critical moment to throw the dummy into the gulf, turns round directly that

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task is accomplished, and receives the next bereaved relative who has just ridden up to the scene. This visitor sees with astonishment the legs of the apparition disappearing from view.

The Woman with Two Heads

Brimful of meaning as this beautiful composition appears to be, and popular as it has always been with Goya's imitators, its meaning has in some strange way escaped detection. The reason for this may possibly be that in it the resourceful artist has employed yet another system of symbolism. He has made use of a mixture of the real and the symbolic that produces a result more than usually baffling, unless this device is grasped from the beginning. And yet it will be seen that he has been at considerable pains to distinguish the one from the other. The real components of the design that stand for reality are drawn in a variety of line that follow and surround contours so as to bring out their form in the usual manner of etched drawings : but the symbolic figures are rendered by fine horizontal lines without surrounding boundaries, and a thin aquatint is taken over them to bind them together and give them enough solidity to take their part in the ensemble. The figures of the old women are the supreme expression of great art. In them

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the effect of age upon the human frame is carried to that ultimate shore where there ceases to be any difference between sexes. In the arrangement of the masses and the eloquence of gesture the old man regains the mastery that belongs to the "Disasters of War," though we are conscious that the variety of line and the management of light and shade is in some way below the high standard of the earlier series.

A woman of full development, with two heads, has just arrived at the top step of a portico belonging to a religious retreat for women, where she is greeted hospitably by a few of the inmates. These are the components of the design or of the occurrence that are to be taken as belonging to the world of reality.

Behind the figure of the new arrival we see two figures who follow her up the flight of steps. One is a person of great charm and remarkable intelligence and firmness of purpose, as indicated by the lofty brow, the regular clear-cut features, and the unusual width between the eyes. This person drags in his wake a poor unhinged creature who betrays all the signs of mental and physical breakdown. These two figures denote Sanity and Insanity and constitute the unreal

DISPARATE, II



Disparate No. 11

portion of the composition—symbolic figures purely.

In this drawing we get a reflection of the part women had played in the artist's long and vivid life, for he had always loved women well and never tired of drawing and painting them. It is not for us to venture an opinion as to whether he excelled in the portraiture of men or of women : but we may say that in his etchings he drew them with a lover's tenderness and seldom failed to extend them a sympathy and consideration that came warm and passionate from his heart.

He has attempted in the person of the woman with two heads to summarize his experiences of the sex's strength and weakness, and to show us how needful it is for her to realize the dangers to which her nature exposes her.

In the head that first catches the eye, Goya has suggested a woman of some intellectual possibilities, who though harassed and perplexed by divided purposes still clings to the sweetness and wholesomeness of life. She is an unmarried woman and she is fitted most conspicuously for the duties and pleasures of motherhood, but she is of mature years and the frustration of her natural impulses faces her with a crisis. We see in the

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other head the nature of the danger that threatens her, and which has driven her to seek shelter in this refuge from her disappointed passions. The face broods darkly over sullen thoughts ; jealousies absorb her, and revenges debase her. She comes, not to throw off her troubles, but to nurse them.

We can now divine the meaning of the drama and the purpose of the double gesture. One hand, in obedience to the second head, is extended to the refuge, asking for admission, and the other, in obedience to the first head, beckons to Sanity to enter with her. Sanity, with an eloquent hand, says—"No. I cannot enter there. If you must go in, I have here the only companion that you will be allowed to take with you. You will find her tireless in her attention, always at your side. She is quite harmless and will not prevent your attaining to any term of years on which you may have set your heart. Within those walls years count for nothing. If you doubt me, look at these examples of the claustral system that are so eager to receive you. In them you will see the stages through which you will pass before your ineffectual clay is laid away in the burial-garth at some remote date, unwept and unremembered."

Disparate No. 11

bered. Before you enter, gaze on me for the last time.

“The sweet wide world for me, the open road,
and nature’s honest laws. Farewell.”

The Dancing Giant

WE now come to designs of more momentous intention, in which lay graver dangers to the artist should his meaning be detected. We find him striking viciously at the hateful monster that with its coils is strangling the soul of Spain, and not of Spain alone but of all the world. We are reminded of Heine's words when he reviews the intellectual life of Europe : "Holy vampires of the Middle Ages have sucked away so much of our life-blood that the world has become a hospital." In some of these etchings he has been careful to enwrap his meaning in still deeper obscurity, for the Inquisition is not unaware of his heterodoxy and their agents were everywhere.

The "Dancing Giant," apart from its hidden thrust, is a design of tremendous spirit and power, and is always singled out by the critics for their unreserved admiration. It is so compelling in its conveyance of a sense of remorseless gaiety and overmastering strength, with a vein of tragedy running through it, that, whether you understand

DISPARATE, 12



Disparate No. 12

it or not, it is impossible to examine it without receiving a shock as of some deep mysterious force. It is dominated by a heavy clownish figure that smiles an enigmatic smile. First there is a suggestion of rough kindliness that seems to be the result of superabundant animal health. The large, loose mouth and rudimentary features belong to one who knows no sophistry, no compromise, no forgiveness for wilful injury. It is shrewd, too, and though the eyes are sunk and almost useless there is in the brow an indication that this monstrous being has other and surer methods of discernment than the ordinary five senses can supply.

In deciding the sex of the giant we are at first no doubt inclined to call it masculine because the legs are clothed in what looks like a male garment ; but when we note the manner in which the hair is combed back from the brow where it grows low down on the forehead, the length of the hair, the delicacy of the hands, the smooth white surface of the breast that is intentionally revealed to us, we have to admit that there are at least as many feminine characteristics as there are male. In the hands are castanets and the unwieldy frame stamps out a slow measured rhythm, infinitely

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simple and unstudied, in time with the out-spread hands. Under each arm we see a face of surpassing horror, dimly suggested in the background.

The other side of the design contains the figure of a man of low cranial capacity, who exhibits signs of the premature decay of a powerful frame, due to the too free indulgence of his animal appetites. Between himself and the giant he holds a hooded figure in which we recognize the stiff wooden props and the inflated skirts of the altar-virgin. Beneath her veil he holds an empty wine-glass. Part of her vestment he has drawn tightly round his stooping shoulders. The part he plays in the scene is not difficult to detect. He also supplies us with the clue to the giant's identity, from whom he seeks so earnestly to hide himself. The giant represents in a masterly way the unalterable laws of Organic Life,—those laws that man would fain evade if he could, but from which all his artifices and pretences cannot save him. Whoso breaks these laws shall pay the last penalty, and in those faces at the back, of madness and despair, we read what the penalty is. We may call this figure "Nature" and the melody or air to which the figure keeps time represents the rhythm of life,

Disparate No. 12

so simple and so compelling, to which we all must march.

We can now translate the meaning of that great smile :—

“ So you thought to escape me after the long and infamous life that you have led. You have defied me and outraged me continually through all these years, and now that you see the end is drawing nearer, you think to hide beneath the thin cloak of religion, and so evade the consequences of your beastliness. No, no, my friend, that stale old device does not deceive me. As you have sown, so shall you reap. That is my law, and all your contemptible and transparent mummery won’t alter it. So fall in behind with the rest of them. Your time has come.”

Although we have come to recognize it as a rule with Goya to give to his symbolic figures, such as this of the Giant, an indeterminate sex it was before we became aware of such a rule that we arrived at the significance of this plate. We met with the same contrivance in plate X, the design with the two-headed woman, in which it will have been noticed that the symbolic figures of Sanity and Insanity are of doubtful sex. Beruete,

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in his short analysis, that ends with the usual declaration of his inability to understand it, says without qualification that they are "two men." Now that we have discovered the key we can see clearly that Goya intended them to belong to both sexes.

In the case of the Giant, a very interesting confirmation of this view is supplied by one of the drawings alluded to above, one of the rejects among the trial drawings for the *Disparates*. This drawing, which is stamped with the stamp of the Public Collection, and which is numbered 81 on the top right hand corner, shows an enigmatic figure heavily draped with nondescript garments, dancing to the sound of castanets, and smiling with a twisted smile, but not such a tender enveloping smile as that of the Giant in the etching. It is evidently a trial sketch of "Nature," indeterminate of sex, but approached from the feminine side. Goya evidently decided that presented in this way the masculine side was not sufficiently prominent, for beyond the bald head and the coarse hands this side hardly appears at all. So he made further experiment by approaching the difficult subject from the male side, giving to it the female characteristics we have drawn attention to in our analysis,

Disparate No. 12

as feminine touches upon a masculine foundation.

There can be little doubt that the method he adopted gave the more expressive result.

DISPARATE NO. 13

Soldiers and the Phantom

THE advanced column of an attacking army is training their guns upon the enemy, which stubbornly defend an entrenched position at the foot of a hill. The fight is being carried on with tremendous dash and courage and many fall in the fray. The gun is placed behind a tree that has lost many branches in the shower of lead, and is directed at the lower end of the hill which appears to be its most accessible point. In the foreground is a group of soldiers who are taking no part in the battle. Their attention is entirely engrossed by a sheeted shape of enormous height and alarming aspect that has approached them. It takes the legendary form of a figure of Death in a very imperfect way, for it is obviously a make-believe apparition clumsily put together, and its white draperies hang anxiously from a framework of laths and props.

We are able to follow the line of the long sleeve that covers the nearer arm and at the end of the sleeve, where we should expect to see the hand, we find only a crafty, stupid face that looks out mockingly upon the group of unoccupied men.



DISPARATE, 13

Disparate No. 13

The end or edge of the sleeve hangs over the peeping face in such a way as to suggest in an unmistakable manner the cowl of a monk or priest. We conclude that this is the ill-timed buffoon who is manipulating the machinery of this walking apparition.

We are present at that interminable battle that rages ceaselessly between the champions of light and the forces of darkness, superstition and fraud. The pioneers of progress, who bear the brunt of the encounter, stand beneath the tree of knowledge and their objective is those dim and distant heights whereon the mills of time grind out the golden grain of Truth.

It is a grim piece of work and only real men are wanted there, but upon this scene of earnest effort and self-sacrifice there stalks this low and ribald impostor with his clumsy bogey. Where help is asked for—honest manly help—a gigantic sham is introduced, which far from providing any form of help has the result of causing able-bodied soldiers to neglect their duty.

This imposture is received in different ways by the men it menaces. One runs straight off the field in undisguised terror—an unmasked deserter. Another shelters his dying friend from the phantom's imaginary grip. Both of these have fixed

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their eyes on the empty space where they suppose the death's head to be, indicating the completeness of their faith in its impossible terrors. The third, a superbly built man with an intelligent face, who ought to be in the fighting line, amuses himself by closely examining the machinery of the apparition in a detached and interested manner.

We find this plate in some ways lacking in the interest that belongs to the best of the *Disparates*. It is elaborately and cleverly conceived and worked out with a fine sense of indignant protest and sincerity, but it can never overcome the artistic weakness of the scaffolded drapery that our æsthetic sense cannot accept, and which destroys the scale of the figures. It unquestionably upholds the standard of large sanity that distinguishes Goya's ideas, a sanity that the most outrageous grotesques never for a moment hide, but for all that it is deficient in grip.

The complaint against the churchmen, that is so elaborately disguised and hidden away among all this military display, is simply this: Since the very earliest and most primitive times, the established rulers of the current religion, using the term "religion" to cover any and every manifesta-

Disparate No. 13

tion of belief in some unknown power that mankind has formulated and dignified with the name of God, have seized upon the natural fear of death that is implanted in all forms of organic life, from the humblest insect to the wisest man, and by systematically cultivating and enlarging this natural dread they have succeeded in foisting themselves very firmly upon the mass mind. They have continually represented themselves as authorized conductors or privileged guides through the portals of death, and the greater the fear that they have been able to implant and encourage in the minds of their adherents, the greater is their influence over them. It is a poor enough device, but it has been amazingly successful, and it will survive for a long time the attacks of the rationalists.

Goya further draws attention to the hindrance this shibboleth has become to the advancement of humanity. People are so obsessed and absorbed in the contemplation of death and in preparation for it, that they have no time to give to the urgent duties of life. This is the outcome of an intentionally exaggerated and illogical presentment of a simple and beneficent natural fact.

Goya was so impressed with the mischief this

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belief was doing that he returned to it again and again in his drawings and combated it with all the force of his mind.

Before leaving this deeply felt design we will refer again to the figure of the idle but magnificently made soldier, who with the air of detachment contemplates the curious phenomenon before him. This is one of those gems of expression that are scattered through these plates by the master hand. It gives us suddenly a glimpse into the amazing universality of Goya's vision, and supplies us with a perfect instance of the subtlety and reach of his intellect, and we are the more amazed when we remember that in the ordinary sense he had received no education whatever.

He shows us here a man of exceptional power who devotes his outstanding ability to the unimpassioned analysis of a world-old myth. The philosophic abstraction of his gaze entirely dissociates him from the urgency of the effort that is going on about him. We may see in him perhaps a Lecky or a Gibbon or possibly a Voltaire, mighty in intellect, but in performance, if not exactly negligible, yet at any rate much discounted, through the persistent aloofness and coldness of their attitude, and their disinclination or powerless-

Disparate No. 13

ness to turn their gifts to the timely assistance of a perishing humanity.

This soldier seems to say "Though civilization falls in ruin about me I must add this priceless specimen to my collection." In fact we detect Goya expressing a certain impatience with the purely objective attitude of the scientist, which was distasteful to his ardent spirit—and yet his own contribution to the struggle was delayed a hundred years by reason of the elaborate precautions he took to keep its meaning hidden. So we have to choose between two answers to the riddle—either the world has proved far less intelligent than he gave it credit for when he propounded his conundrums, or else we are listening to the tortoise asking the hare to travel a little faster.

It has often been said that Goya had in his mind a new volume of *Caprichos* and that he had made many studies for the projected work. Among the hundreds of drawings that he left behind him in chalk, sepia or Indian ink, it is always interesting to look for those that might perhaps have been made for this purpose. Our own opinion is that the old artist would never have undertaken another volume of *Caprichos* if the vein of satire were to be identical with that of the earlier work. It is

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much more likely that he would have made the new designs in a spirit more analogous to that displayed in the Proverbs,—a happier and much more hopeful spirit than the other. As he grew older he did not grow more bitter. His criticism grew more constructive and more helpful, for he seems to have recognized in the outlook of the newer generation a tendency to follow his own teaching, a desire to escape from the strangling hold that Church and State had got upon the nation's life. To illustrate this kindlier side of Goya's ripening views we have selected a drawing of the monk and the boy which might very well have been intended to form a page of a publication such as he had in view. The monk with heavy, lifeless face, index of the deadening effect of sustained absorption in a fixed idea, seeks to gain control over the boy's expanding mind. With his right hand he points to a skull that rests by his side. In his left hand he uplifts the cross. The boy is quite unimpressed by these Symbols of the monk's faith. Gaily he holds aloft a heavy, mattock. How beautifully the artist has expressed the two contrasting ideals of the Old Spain and the New. We can almost hear the monk's droning voice—



DISPARATE, 13 (ii)

Disparate No. 13

"Life, my son, is given to us that we may prepare ourselves for death. Death is sure, and life is short, so while life lasts hold fast to the Cross."

And across the monk's deep tones there trills the boy's glad treble—

"Death does not frighten me, old man ! While you are mumbling your prayers I'll be tilling the field and getting ready for the next harvest. So long as I'm alive I don't mean to go hungry.

The analogy between this drawing and Disparate 13 is quite noticeable.

DISPARATE NO. 14

*A Company of People Seated on the Branch of a Tree,
Listening to an Orator.*

A BRANCH of a tree extends right across the picture. It is decayed and bare. The atmosphere of the scene is lifeless. Upon the branch are seated a group of ten people, eight of whom form the audience of an orator who is much concealed in strange and voluminous vestments. The speaker is attended by a woman.

The group of eight listeners contains two males of unwholesome aspect, one old and whiskered who has the air of obstinate credulity associated with a solitary and self-absorbed life. His knees are covered by a heavy rug patterned in a manner somewhat akin to the vestments of the speaker. The other male is younger and he seems to pride himself on the fact that he is permitted to occupy a seat so near to the authority. He also is clothed in vestments, and his face wears the fatuous, complacent smile of the initiated. There are five women of different ages, and one little girl. The women are a varied assortment. One old woman who sits next to the whiskered elder obviously wishes herself elsewhere. It is only the old man's

DISPARATE, 14



Disparate No. 14

obstinacy that keeps her where she is. The spouse of the great initiated shares completely her lord's complacency. Her neighbour is divided between a lingering doubt as to the security of her resting-place and a certain thin-lipped satisfaction in the possibilities of a cult that promises so much. Two old women in the background are only hinted at. These show types of cranial malformation associated so often with debased rituals and observances. The little girl in the foreground detaches herself completely from the abnormal interests of her elders. She occupies herself in watching the everyday life that is going on below her, evidencing the healthy instincts of childhood.

A significant part that must not be overlooked is, that though there are ten people in the picture, there are only two hands to be seen. In the notation evolved by Goya for the double purpose of expressing and at the same time obscuring his thoughts, covered hands always signify idleness and lack of employment. The two hands that are visible belong to the speaker, and he is something of an anomaly. He is low-browed, with a fleshy, curved and pointed nose and a black beard. His face is black and his hands are white. This contradiction denotes in the vernacular of

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the Disparates that whatever he sets up to be, he is an impostor. We shall meet with this phrase again. His hands, which are very clearly detailed, one long and grasping, show signs of having always avoided hard work. He betrays the self-absorption of the quack, the look of those who are ridden by one idea. In these days we recognize the type as the growth of provincial booths and little Bethels, exploiters of herbalism and other forms of hocus-pocus, wordy, specious, greedy and obscure. The woman who accompanies him is the familiar, the adept, the medium, or whatever term is applied to the indispensable female confederate. She turns away from her dupes, for she has heard the rigmarole so often. Covertly she smiles, a kindly smile as though she sometimes wished that people were not so credulous. Within her voluminous sleeve she fingers the "properties" of her craft, biding her time till the moment arrives for her to play her part in the comedy.

As a design this is one of the most successful of the plates. It has been suggested that the arrangement may have been derived from a Japanese print, one of those charming wood-cuts that represent a group of birds nestling together upon a wintry bough. It is quite possible, though the

Disparate No. 14

grouping and characterization are pure Goya.

We have to admit that we experienced the greatest difficulty in reaching a solution of this etching. It might, with just tiny alterations or additions, be made to mean so many things. We must also confess that we approached it with so strong a prejudice that it would turn out to be a religious satire as to prevent the real meaning asserting itself.

Curiously enough it came at last through Borrow, of all people—Borrow, with his hateful little books ! There was something in the provincialism of the group that suggested gypsies, something too in the clothes, and from gypsies to Borrow was a short step. From Borrow's gypsies we came to the Scholar Gypsy and Glanvil.

“The gypsy crew

His mates, had arts to rule as they desired

The workings of men’s brains,” etc., etc.

From this to superstition generally and afterwards to the particular form of it here depicted.

But it required some study of the superstitions that flourished in this particular period to convince us that we were dealing with “the Occult.” History is not our strong point, and it was not until we came upon this passage in Mallet’s *French*

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Revolution that the truth emerged out of the fog—

“The feverish unrest of the time produced a revival of the mysticism of an earlier day. On the eve of the French Revolution, the best educated classes of Europe were engrossed by secret societies and brotherhoods, like the Illuminati, the Swedenborgians, the Mesmerists, the Rosicrucians, dabbling on all sides in necromancy and occult science, and frequently the dupes of ridiculous impostors, who, catching the temper of the times, proposed to effect by charlatanism the regeneration of the world.”

After that all was plain sailing and as we penetrated further into the real meaning of the *Disparates*, we found that yet another plate is devoted to the exposure of another phase of the same thing, and that a third plate makes allusion to it. Goya was clearly convinced that a grave danger to humanity lay behind this form of imposture, and he smote it accordingly with all his power : but why, if the danger was imminent, he covered up his attack so sedulously is a mystery.

It seems to us that this form of human credulity is far too deeply seated to yield to attacks of this nature, no matter how stinging and destructive they may be. There would appear to be a blind

Disparate No. 14

spot in the brain of man that no shaft of light can touch. This form of charlatanism has survived exposures of the most desolating character. Ridicule is powerless against it. There is a dark chamber hidden away in the mind that dates from ages long ago, and in this chamber lies a beast asleep. Sometimes a stray sound or smell or whisper reaches this hidden place and then the beast turns over in its sleep, and there returns to man some half obliterated impulse to sound the bull-roarer in the night, to dance in painted skin, to ululate the forgotten Lartna song, and to observe again the ritual of his totem. This awful thing is there and we cannot reach it with our gibes.

However, it is not permissible in this book to introduce personal opinion upon the usefulness or otherwise of the Disparates. This book's object is to present Goya's thought, so this chapter may be concluded by allowing him to state his case in his own way.

"Beware of small coteries that draw apart from the community to practise unwholesome mysteries. They rest upon foundations that are rotten with decay and their atmosphere is intellectually and morally stifling. The proportion of the sexes in these communities is usually one man to three

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women, and that is an ominous fact. They are promoted by foreigners who claim to preserve an Egyptian tradition, impudent impostors who prey upon disappointed, lonely women and all kinds of idle and ignorant people. Their methods are so glaringly fraudulent that their followers would unmask them at once if they were not blinded by superstition and so hungry for emotional experience that they will accept the most rancid clap-trap with gratitude.”

Disparate furioso

WE now come to the strongest, the most alluring and the most difficult of the designs. Connoisseurs have always expressed for it their admiration with certain reservations based upon technical grounds. It has always been regarded beyond any of the others as difficult, and no guess as to its meaning has ever been ventured by anybody.

Señor de Beruete makes an analysis of it in the desperate manner of the earnest but despondent scholar. He finds it not so happy as some of the others and calls its method "dry and arid." "But," he admits, "the fury of the figures is unsurpassed."

He deals of course with an original etching that Goya printed himself when the plate was fresh, but for most of us such privileges are out of the question, and we must content ourselves with reproductions.

The composition is so arrestingly purposeful and its message or meaning is expressed with an insistence so urgent and yet so trustful, that the unusually impenetrable mist in which its mean-

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ing is hidden comes to us as a surprise. This hint of exaggerated caution brings to one's mind the illuminating phrase that Herman Melville has dropped into Moby Dick : "The most unmentionable things are always the wonderfulest," and this thought has the effect, perhaps, of sharpening the appetite to possess them.

So partly for these reasons and also for the stimulus of difficulties to be overcome, we enter upon the interpretation of this plate with more than usual relish.

Its name, "Disparate furioso," is written in Goya's hand upon one of the rare originals that is in the possession of some fortunate collector—Señor Vindel, perhaps. This title tells us nothing at all, which is the usual contradictory result of Goya's nomenclature.

Before we commence our analysis we are going to take the unusual course of pausing, in order to suggest to the reader that before he reads any further he should devote a little time to attempting the solution himself. Knowing that it has been solved he may attack it with more hope of success than comes to one who storms a position that has never yet been taken. We make this suggestion partly to convince the reader how carefully its



meaning has been hidden, and more particularly to afford him an opportunity of giving himself a wonderful sense of elation if he succeeds in finding the answer. The writer experienced a far greater joy in solving this than in the case of any of the others, not excepting the plate of the "Woman with two heads," and he would wish others to share this sensation. If the reader is a mathematician, he will be reminded of the satisfaction that was his when he solved an indeterminate equation of more than ordinary stubbornness. If he is a chess-player, he will remember an especially elusive problem that defied him for so long. In any case, whether he succeeds or not, he will read the real solution with added interest.

Beginning at the back of the design we find a stone-built wall in a very ruinous condition, the remains of a lofty and imposing building. The roof is gone, and what is left of the masonry is falling rapidly into utter decay. There are evidences that it was originally well built and might have been expected to last indefinitely. Above it is a sky of unbroken blackness. Under this ruined wall is a company of people who are resting comfortably and are apparently quite satisfied with the shelter it affords, and unconscious of

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its dilapidation. One could well believe that they thought the roof was still on.

Of this company we can only discern three individuals. A woman of comfortable build who smilingly engages some unseen person or persons in an entertaining conversation, deaf apparently to the commotion that is going on quite near to her.

A man seems to sleep peacefully in the shadow of the wall. We can see his head, which is somewhat distinguished. His hair is short, which gives him, with his moustache, a rather military look. His brow is high and his features good. Over his shoulders peers another head. It has a mass of curly hair and a moustache and beard, and is of a Patrician type. With a heavy scowl this individual looks disapprovingly at the scrimmage that is going on. He seems to find it in distinctly bad taste. These three are the only guides we have to the kind of people who inhabit the ruins.

The combatants will engage us next. The man on the left who carries a pole with spike at the end is the dominating figure. He demands our most careful study. He is a big man, powerful and active. His clothes are ill-fitting and indeterminate. They are just clothes, adequate to their

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purpose and that is all. His head is wild and unkempt, the head of an idealist. It is well formed but its most marked feature is the eye which glares at his antagonist in a perfect frenzy of rage and disdain. His movements are seriously impeded by a strange figure that from a position between his legs grasps him with its right hand round the waist. The combatant, however, pays very little attention to this semi-human opponent. Almost unconsciously he presses his staff down hard upon the brute's neck, leaving the weapon at the same time free to strike his enemy again in a fresh lunge. His concentration upon his principal enemy is very marked.

The obscene beast between the legs of the idealist seems to play an important part in the drama. Half ape and half human, he defies control, obstructs progress, is ready to rend in pieces and bring to nought the most determined effort. His clutch is tenacious, and the man who owns him must drag this uncompromising disability with him wherever he goes and upon whatever undertaking he embarks. So long, however, as the fighter can keep the monster *down* it is comparatively harmless. Erect, it would be utterly uncontrollable.

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The goad that weighs down upon the brute's neck proclaims the owner as a keeper of wild animals. It has, however, been used freely in the furious battle with the other combatants, as we may judge from the state of their clothes. The second man is quite another type to his vigorous adversary. His clothes are, as we have noted, much damaged by the conflict that seems to have been in progress for a long time, but their quality is unmistakable. They are beautifully cut and they fit him to perfection. His face is the fine dominating face of the ruling class of Goya's day.

His hair is fashionably dressed. He represents "The mould of Form." His features are fine and his expression is that of the stubborn unyielding fighter, who means to hold his own. He is a resister, not an aggressor. The champion of those who live in the ruins : the bulwark of the old order, the splendid thoroughbred Tory who will go down with his flag flying, fighting to the last.

Yet, there is no doubt about it, he is getting the worst of the encounter. We can read it in his eye and in his curled lip that exposes the teeth, in the hunch of his shoulders that receive the blows of the goad. The fight may last a long while yet, but the issue is certain. The Idealist, for

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all the disadvantage of the bestial impediment that hinders, will wear him down.

And what are they fighting about so furiously ? Not for the ruins, we may be sure of that : but for that which this champion of the ruins would prevent his antagonist from reaching. He stands resolutely between the Idealist and a cloaked, detached figure who stands indifferently by. She has the air of one who is accustomed to waiting, and has stood there for a long, long time. Who is she, this white-robed, ascetic figure ?

She is so closely enwrapped in her long robe that we can only see her naked foot. With her right hand she draws a hood over her head so that her face is invisible. Who is it whose face no man can see ? It is Truth. And the idealist would reach her side if he could master his hereditary and brutish enemy and overcome the resistance of him who stands for the established order and for all that is effete and false.

We wonder, should he ever reach his ideal, if he will find it as satisfying as he hopes to do.

This concludes the general summary of the situation—the everlasting conflict between *Things as they are* and *Things as they ought to be* : but there still remain two unexplained figures who

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stand on the side of *Things as they are* and watch the conflict. If we examine them carefully we shall recognize them. We saw them first when they were seated upon the branch of a tree, and again when we visited that unsavoury territory that lies "Behind the Veil." In those plates they represented the practitioners of occult science. Here it is probable that they may be given a wider meaning to include all forms of superstition that are to be swept away in the fortunate days when Truth rules supreme in the world. Whether we take them in the narrower or wider sense, we do not affect the general sense of the etching, but if we adopt the wider, the characterization of the separate figures becomes more purposeful.

One of the figures is a man, the other a woman. Quite clearly they have lost all hope of the victory of their champion. The man, who is bearded and swarthy and wears his hair long as befits one who presides over mysteries, is dressed in the voluminous vestments of his cult. He is dirty, and more ragged than he was when we saw him before, as though his business had fallen away. He eyes the aggressor with a curiously listless look and a cynical smile. He is unexpectedly indifferent and callous and entirely free from ill-will.

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This attitude of superstition to advancing culture is the same that we see in that wonderful conception which is numbered 71 in the Caprichos showing horrible beings, the spawn of darkness, who say—“When the light appears, we go.” Further, the man’s hands are hidden, and this, as we know, denotes idleness. He is a seedy, discredited looking figure suggesting in some way the remnant of a dying race looking stolidly at the new despoilers of his ancient haunts, as for instance the last Tasmanian aboriginal might have looked at the white usurpers of his island home.

A woman stands beside him. She is of another race, for her skin is white. We can see very little of her, for her champion’s body hides her. Just the head is visible that rests upon the shoulder of the black man, and her patched skirt. Her hair is loose and hangs down over her face. Her expression is very clearly made out. There is tenderness in it for the man on whom she leans, regrets are in the lips for vanished comforts, resentment and some curiosity in the eyes for the new régime. If we read her aright we can imagine her saying : “If I have to say good-bye to this dear old impostor I fear I shall miss him. He may not be very intelligent or sanitary and his

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ideas may be out of date, but for all that I am used to him and shall miss him at Christmas time, and at weddings and funerals and such things he was always so comforting. I can't say I take very kindly to that stranger there. She looks so cold and grave and unapproachable. True, she is clean, and beautiful perhaps, but if we are to lose all the mystery and colour of life it may prove a poor exchange. Still, who knows? Possibly there may be compensations."

It remains to be said that the people of the ruins sit in shadow, and the combatants join battle in the fierce light of the sun that throws long shadows.

There are elements in this drawing of extraordinary interest to us to-day, remembering that it was made over a hundred years ago. The thoughts that it contains mark Goya as the true child of the nineteenth century, though actually he lived the greater part of his life in the eighteenth.

As a puzzle or cryptogram it is one of the most perfect of all the *Disparates*, and provides a wonderful example of Goya's skill in masking his thoughts. The introduction of the great ape, the extraordinary way in which the symbolism of the ape is indicated, the resource that hit upon

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this method of saying what in any language would be very difficult indeed to say without giving offence, cannot but fill us with astonishment and admiration.

The consideration of just how far the great ape appealed to Goya's mind as a fitting emblem for man's baser passions leads us to the possibility that we may have here a striking anticipation of the "Origin of Species" which was published nearly fifty years later. We say that this is a possibility, and we have met with such strong evidence in other plates of the tremendous reach of Goya's mind, that we are more than a little inclined to believe that this possibility may perhaps be even a fact. We must leave the question, however, to more competent judges.

We reproduce a brush drawing of the first draught of this Disparate that shows some interesting differences.

DISPARATE NO. 16

Disparate Volante

THIS is the only plate of this series in which we can detect the least allusion to Goya's own life.

It is a thoroughly characteristic design and the etching, according to Beruete, shows more flexibility and firmness than any other of the series. The only known proof that Goya pulled himself has written upon it, in the artist's own hand, the words : "Disparate Volante." It has also a deep, but not an opaque, background of aquatint, that gives great relief to the white form of the Hippogriffe. This fabulous and symbolic beast is attractive enough from some points of view with its feathered tail and sweeping wings, but if we catch sight of its features we see at once that it is not to be trusted. And further, it has tucked up under its beautiful white belly some taloned feet that have a distinctly dangerous look. Astride of its horse-like back is seated a man of vigorous build, rather reminiscent of the artist himself, who holds in his arms a female figure. This figure de Beruete says is a woman, but that is because he

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has not examined her. She certainly looks like a woman to the casual glance, but we observe that the mop that covers her head grows from her eyebrows, and that it is not hair but suggests something coarser. The eyes are prominent like a squirrel's and the nose is beaklike. The fingers end in claws rather than nails. They are stretched towards the sky and seem to provoke her companion to urge the steed to still higher flights.

As she has her back to the man who holds her, he, poor fool, is probably quite unaware of her real character. In perfect good faith he digs his heels into the steed's ribs and heedless of where he is being carried to, resigns himself to follow the whims of his lady love. Up and up they go. Higher and higher ! They are alone soaring far above the clouds, in a land of the imagination where none can follow. What does it matter where we fly to so long as it is on the wings of Art that we are carried ? What do realities matter ? Things are only what we think they are. Let us follow Art, then, to the very end. Nothing else matters.

The history of Art is full of the lives of men who have sacrificed everything in the world for

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the sake of their chosen profession. This work might apply to many of them, though there are few who spurred their winged steed to regions so remote from the common life of the day as Goya did. Wrapt in his own thoughts and intent upon suppressing them in his own vernacular, Goya left behind him a world that honoured him, and admired him, but which could not understand him. He seems to have been well content not to be understood, and found some secret satisfaction in pouring out his stream of comment and satire upon a rather puzzled community that knew it was being mercilessly satirized, but could not quite tell how. We can look back on the anomalous position of the critic and the unconscious subjects of his gibes and wonder what consolation he could derive from the sound of the whip lash when the patient could not feel the whip. Was it really a belief that at some distant day the solution of the mystery would be found and that he was able to enjoy in advance the sensation that the discovery would make? Well, now that we have found the lost key, have opened the mysterious box, and learnt the nature of his secret thoughts, are we going to make much of a fuss about it? No, not very much. His anticipated climax falls

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a little flat in these busy days, and the sensation that he may perhaps have expected will not occupy us for very long. Dust and ashes ! And a final gash from the talons of the Hippogriffe.

DISPARATE NO. 17

Disparate Conocido

IT is not surprising that this etching has been understood. In its second state it had the words "Quel guerriero!" printed beneath, which may be translated into "Who'd be a soldier?"

The two clothed dummies, one armed with a sword and the other with a musket, represent two classes of troops for which recruits are apparently needed. Goya seems to have engraved this plate with a view to discourage recruiting, acting, we must suppose, upon his hatred of militarism in general—the feeling that prompted him to issue the series known as the "Disasters of War."

Standing at a respectful distance from these impressive martial emblems is a crowd of people, all obviously unsuitable for military service. They are far enough away to be excused for taking the dummy figures for real soldiers, and they are therefore amazed to note the behaviour of a well-built young man of desirable military age who stands between them and the supposed sergeants,



DISPARATE, 17

Disparate No 17

making derisive gestures at all their soldierly splendour. Clearly this young man—young Spain, shall we say?—has no delusions as to the glory that war brings. No more War for him!

One could understand this better if it were intended to be a Spanish gesture of contempt at the Downfall of Napoleon, but there seems no ground to suppose that it is. Since it was the failure of Spanish arms that was the real cause of the "Disasters of War," how could Goya lend himself to discourage recruiting, and so weaken Spain's power of resistance if a fresh disaster threatened her? There appears to be a confusion of thought somewhere, but our historical scholarship is not sound enough to say exactly where.

In our opinion this is a capital example of Goya's most virile manner, thoroughly characteristic and beautifully arranged, with its masses of black and white in exactly the right places.

It is a quaint anomaly that this design, so clear, so precise and so perfectly printed, should baffle our complete comprehension, while others of the series that have reached us in a much damaged state, with their lines and masses inextricably

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confused, should have yielded their complete message to our analysis.

It may interest some readers to learn that Vincent Van Gogh bought a copy of this etching in its first state, for 13 florins, in 1915.

DISPARATE NO. 18

Disparate Matrimonial

REVOLTING as this plate may appear to be at first sight, it nevertheless reveals to us more clearly than any other the deeply thoughtful mind that Goya brought to the execution of this series, which is the side of him that it is the aim of this book to bring out. We realize, when we have grasped the meaning of the design, that his mind had an unequalled capacity for running forward along the line that human intellect was destined to move. He possessed the faculty of anticipation in as marked a degree as many great minds have possessed the faculty to retrace the course of human progress. Not only did he foresee the coming trend of thought in a vague and general manner, but he was able in these bitter plates to particularize with astonishing exactitude the form that future schools of thought would eventually take. This Disparate brings us up to the very day in which its interpretation is made public. But before we go further in this direction we will make our detailed analysis in the usual manner.

A symbolic figure, bincorporeal and bisexual, dominates the design. The two bodies are back

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to back and they are provided with double feet that would permit them to move in either direction. As we see them, the male side is in action and the female side is in repose. The head has two faces, both of them designed to express that they belong to a period of development very little removed from the earliest forms of life. They are so elementary in their features that they might almost be called bactrian, or even fishlike, and of the two the female side is more remote in its evolutionary origin than the male. It suggests a being that though human in bodily outline is nevertheless ruled solely by instincts of the most primary character, that of sex being clearly the most pronounced. The male component of the monster is engrossed in an altercation with a figure of degraded character, whose loose unwholesome features betray baffled hopes and spiteful and unnatural wishes. This unlovely personage, in company with a dozen or so others of equally undesirable types, clasps his gloved hands in his agony and kneels to the monster, making of him some urgent request which is evidently being refused with pointed scorn. From the characteristics of the kneeling types we judge that they are taken from those who all their lives long have in one way or another been at cross-



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purposes with life—cranks, sadists and killjoys, ranters, and perverts, practisers of unnatural crime,—those who have presumed to know better than Nature how life should be lived, and have deformed their own lives and have done their utmost, by spreading their abominable creeds, to deform the lives of others. For one reason or another they have all of them practised some unspeakable substitute for normal sexual intercourse until they have become sexually impotent either naturally or unnaturally. Dismayed at this unexpected outcome of their habits and beliefs they call upon Life to restore to them their lost powers. But Life says “No ! You knew better than I how your bodies should be employed, so you shall abide by the consequences of your presumption. You and your misshapen brood must go ! Make way for those who shall be content to live wholesome and natural lives, obeying *my* laws which are above all laws.”

Behind the two-fold symbol of natural increase we behold a sad and pathetic little group who are deeply concerned in the verdict that shall be passed upon themselves and their elders. These are the real or the potential progeny of the unnatural intercourse of perverted parents (condemned by

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nature's law to sterility)—a terrible suggestion of the harvest of crime that stands, we should suppose, unparalleled in the records of graphic art, and which bears witness to the fearlessness of Goya's comment on the vices of his day.

In referring to the monster as "Life" we are using the word in a restricted sense, for obviously it has no concern with intellectual life or with any higher form of it. The department of Life that Goya intended was the elemental part of it that refers back to remote beginnings before man could be called "Man." We seem to catch in this strange drawing two or even three distinct premonitions of coming scientific theses. First there is the clearly indicated forecast of the theory of the evolution of Man from lower forms of life, which it anticipates by nearly fifty years. Secondly there is a clear statement on the sterility of Hybrids that seems to contain at least a suggestion of Mendel's Law. Then a further anticipation—this time by nearly a hundred years—of those theories that are usually associated with the name of Dr. Freud. In this case Goya lays down the law that whoso shall outrage Life's laws will not avoid Life's revenges, which may be taken as saying in a concise form what is really at the root of many of the

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doctrines of the psycho-analysts. The teaching of the plate is quite obviously closely allied to that of the Dancing Hermaphrodite Giant, only it is far deeper and sterner. His scourging of the practice of trying to escape by the road of religion from the results of self-indulgence and life-long profligacy is almost trite as compared with this forcible presentment of a great natural law that has its obscure sources in far away Jurassic ages that held the blind beginnings of our race. The castigation of those who would befoul the clear fountains of Life could not be more effectively or more unanswerably done by the whole array of advanced Viennese Professors, and barrow-loads of their formidable publications.

There are four states of this plate.

1. Before the aquatint was added and before the number. This is extremely rare.
2. Before the number but after the aquatint, with certain alterations in the costume of the perverted creature on the left and a denudation of the breasts of the female side of the monster.
3. Before the number and with a deepening of the aquatint almost to blackness.
4. With the number 7 in margin at the top on the right.

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The plate is in existence in Madrid.

De Beruete in his remarks upon this wonderful drawing hardly rises to the occasion. After a very unilluminating analysis he goes on to say :—

“ After allowing a good deal for the state of the plate, which has been considerably damaged and which shows lines lacking in variety without shadings and finesse, etc. . . . it cannot be taken as a model of what etching should be. Moreover, the conception of the work is incoherent and in bad taste, and the lack of this cannot be outweighed by the presence of other qualities whatever they may be, whether intention, grandeur or even his philosophy. Frankly, the work is the reverse of artistic and grotesque as well.”

This, for de Beruete, is something in the nature of an outbreak, making him desert for a moment his strictly objective attitude. He goes so far as to question Goya’s taste ! Doubtless the attack may be excused on the ground that the critic had not the slightest idea of what the plate was meant to convey, but even so the reference to Goya’s “philosophy” is rather unfortunate. The question opens up a very wide ground of discussion, whether, for instance, it is the business of an artist to use his genius to castigate the most horrible breaches

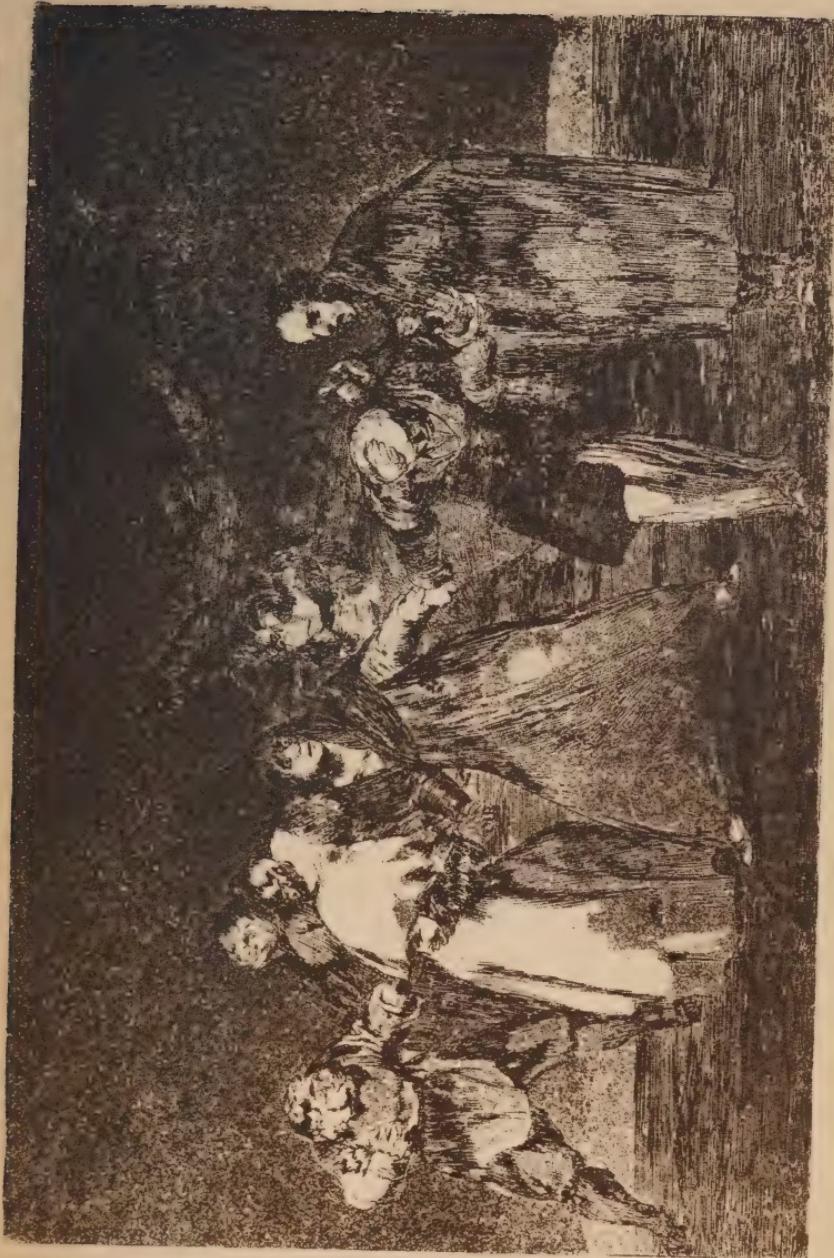
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of morality that he is aware are going on about him. Still, that, after all, is the artist's business, and de Beruete imperils his position as the foremost Spanish authority on Goya when he makes such a lamentable display of his want of understanding of the Master's mentality. If he were alive now, de Beruete might possibly offer as an excuse for his blunder the obscurity of the plate : but we say very earnestly that these plates are *not* obscure. The meaning of this one is as clear as possible. There is absolutely no escape from it. Though we may not altogether like it, we have to admit its grandeur and the unbelievable immensity of its scope.

Divorce

SIX figures and a huge bird make up the components of this puzzling design. Goya has allowed full scope to his favourite practice of apportioning to individuals more than their proper share of heads, hands and other members. The central figures are those of an elderly pair who seem to be harassed to death by the attentions of the others. They are united by their hands and seem to be desirous of parting, but the other members of the group are determined that there shall be no release until they have been satisfied in every particular. We feel sure that if Divorce is the object that is desired by this couple—and that seems to be the business in hand—that the legal and religious difficulties were as numerous and as tiresome in Goya's day as they are now. We have not sufficient knowledge of the legal technicalities of Divorce in Spain a hundred years ago to say exactly what each figure in the scene represents, but there is no difficulty in recognizing the barrister who harangues the husband and the churchman who whispers to the wife. Both these individuals can find time during their admonitions to pick the pockets of their clients.

DISPARATE, 18 (ii)



Divorce

The design is evidently a caustic comment upon the expense and difficulty of Divorce and upon the rascality of those who administer it.

The costume of the husband seems to point to this plate having been etched quite at the end of Goya's life, and very possibly gives us a key to the date of all the series. Further, there is something about the husband's figure that suggests a French rather than a Spanish character and might perhaps be placed in point of time after Goya's visit to Paris (1824).

AFTER two thrusts at the Law we now have
a tilt at Medicine.

The poor sick man sits upon his stool in the centre of the design, deserted by all but his faithful dog. He is self-centred and very miserable. Seven derisive Quacks approach him, each with his pet nostrum, and urge him to try a remedy. One more practical than the others proposes to employ an enema. At the back of the picture a properly qualified medical man rides up too late to treat the patient, finding that he is already in the clutches of these unpleasant attendants.

Goya excels himself in the manner in which he has heaped his scorn upon the whole tribe of practitioners, whether qualified or unqualified. Incompetence in all forms could always draw his fire and in these etchings he seems to have attacked each profession in turn, not even omitting his own.

Quackery must have been an overcrowded profession if the proportion of practitioners to the number of qualified doctors was seven to one !

On an early proof of this etching belonging to



DISPARATE, 19

Disparate No. 19

M. Maurice Pereire there is written in manuscript the words "La lealtad," by which title some people know it; "Loyalty" being, we presume, the note that is struck by the sick man's dog.

DISPARATE NO. 20

Disparate de Carnabal

IN the centre of the design are two fantastic figures engaged in a quarrel. They are intended to be rather poor imitations of real men, whose features and members have been hurriedly put together. In one case the left eye has slipped down to the top lip. On the right another figure has been planted in a somewhat stagey attitude. Its sex is doubtful, but its clothes are obviously of the theatre. On the left a fourth figure is being placed in position by an attendant who avoids being seen. The figure is a very unconvincing and moth-eaten representation of Cardinal Richlieu. Round about the four figures moves a man on stilts. Half lying upon the ground is the representation of a fat man dressed in a quasi-military costume, who surveys the disputants. He appears to have either lost his balance, or been knocked over in the heat of the controversy. In the background we distinguish some real people who show signs of being deeply absorbed in the action of the figures. We are not sufficiently familiar with the plots of Spanish plays of this era, otherwise it is quite possible that the play,



Disparate No. 20

of which this is probably a scene, could be identified. The point, however, of the drawing is that the drama, whatever it may be, is being very badly acted, and that bad as it is the acting is able to command the interest of the public. Goya satirizes in these etchings the Law, Medicine, Religion, and other professions, and in this case he attacks the decadent Stage : but in offering this solution we are as usual in disagreement with authority.

Of all Goya's commentators Lefort is the most entertaining because of his invincible prejudices. He has convinced himself that Goya was always castigating the extravagances of the Court, and in consequence of this preconception he never meets a female figure without identifying it as Queen Marie-Louise, or a well dressed male figure but he calls it "Godoy." He does this in spite of Goya's reiterated statement that he does not deal with personalities, but uses what he calls "The Universal Idiom." In interpreting this plate Queen Marie-Louise and Godoy have to stand out, for obvious reasons, but he still can manage to drag in a Political basis for the design—

"Here is another drawing the date of whose execution is revealed by the presence of a French soldier—half reclining on the ground—or if not

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absolutely fixed it is at any rate confined between the dates 1808 and 1813 : we think even that it might be fastened down to the year 1808, on the supposition that the Convocation, which seems to us to be the subject of this caricature of politics, might well be the Convocation of Bayonne. Does not the man on stilts appear where he is in order to precisely establish the whereabouts of the Convocation ? ” (P. Lefort, *Goya*, pp. 89–90).

What a snare is learning !



DISPARATE, 21

Disparate General

THE aquatint in this plate has been taken so fully over the greater part of the design that we are faced by a very difficult task when we come to attempt to analyse it. The only copy that has come under our notice is the one in the British Museum. If ever a proof should be found that was taken from the plate before the aquatint was added, it might be possible to disentangle it.

Meanwhile let us hear the great Lefort, who has no misgivings. Needless to say he places it in the Palace !

“ This curious Court scene, which is no more than a satire on the dulness of Court life, contains at the same time a laughing allusion to the affection which Queen Marie-Louise expended upon her little cats. Some writers have taken it for a scene of sorcery due no doubt to the unintelligent way in which the aquatint was put on when it was printed in 1864 ” (P. Lefort, *Goya*).

De Beruete, with some reason we must admit, is unable to agree with this authority.

AMONG deep shadows strange forms are moving. Unearthly shapes loom through the darkness and draw inward towards the central feature of the composition. Unusual activity is to be observed because a stranger face has made its first appearance in heaven ! Yes, a worthy citizen, "deeply respected by all who knew him" has been called away. His mortal remains we can discern laying full length upon the ground and lit by an uncanny light. This of course is only the perishable part of him, which will be laid to rest with all the usual features of funereal ceremony and a well-worded memorial stone will be eventually placed on the top of him. So much for our respected neighbour !

But stay, his spiritual form is even now detaching itself from his clay. We are privileged to witness the phenomenon of his transfiguration. The worthy citizen, still quite recognizable as such, bald, homely, and not over wise, is actually now opening his astonished eyes in his new surroundings. What is this ?—harps and angels' voices does he hear ? Do kind hands receive him as he had been so faithfully promised ? Do the heavenly choirs



DISPARATE, 22

Disparate No. 22

sing a triumphant chant to welcome this brand
that has been snatched from the burning? No!
Nothing of the sort!

Sardonic laughter fills his ears. In some of
these grimacing forms he recognizes old and
valued friends whose holy lives are still remembered
by sorrowing friends. Even his much lamented
and beloved wife—a woman in a thousand—in
her new guise of a great black bird, mocks at him
to his amazement.

So priests' tales are not true after all! Well,
well, who'd have believed it?

It is unknown what title Goya provided for this
work, as early proofs are rare and so far one has
not turned up with his handwriting upon it. As
it deals with the end of life it is numbered 18,
which was the end of the series in the edition of
1864. In France it is known as "The old man
wandering among the ghosts," which is not so very
far from its real meaning.

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WE have now completed the interpretation of the Disparates and shown that far from being "inexplicable hallucinations" they are shrewd and penetrating comments upon different phases of human life, with a leaven of that hard flexible sanity that is characteristic of Spaniards in general and of Goya in particular.

An observant critic on looking through this strange series of works cannot avoid noticing the sense of style that underlies them. The artist has achieved this style by means that have a parallel in the productions of a stage manager where sense of the theatre is abstemious and his taste refined to a marked degree. If we regard each plate as the momentary rise and fall of the curtain in the proscenium, we are struck by the sustained and severe emptiness of the stage and the economy of "properties" and the total absence of decorative accessories. For the most part the scenes are laid on a bareness that has no relief at all. Just a ground for the protagonists to stand on and nothing more. For the rest we see here a bunch of bells and a book, there a goad, and in another a sword with which the effect is to be got and the illusion

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sustained. It isn't very much, but it is enough. It achieves unity in the production and gives enormous importance to the objects introduced. When we consider the wonderful structure that Goya has built with these few bricks we get some idea of the enormous power of his intellect, for by means of these trifles he has raised up a towering edifice from which we seem to survey all the avenues of human hopes and of human frailties. To question his taste in any one of these scenes is to betray a lamentable inability to grasp the scale of the entire work, and the sublimity of the idea that prompted him to undertake it.¹ So far as we are aware there is nothing in the whole range of human art that is quite so extensive or ambitious in scale, and when we consider the strange fact that the world has been for nearly a hundred years quite unaware that he had done it, we can only ponder upon the strange character that seems to have done all it could to efface what it had done. Disparates !

There now remains to us one more design to examine which, though not to be numbered among

¹ And yet this sort of thing is often done, as witness the famous dictum of P. G. Hamerton—a critic of note in his day—who wrote that Goya was “ coarse minded and essentially vulgar.”

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the *Disparates*, was executed at the Quinta del Sordo, probably about the same period as the earlier plates of that series. It is known as "The Colossus," and is always described by the authorities as one of the most impressive of Goya's engravings. (See Frontispiece.)

It is said that when the artist had completed the plate he took three impressions from it with his own hands—we believe on three different kinds of paper—and then destroyed it. Later on we may arrive at a guess why he took these extreme measures. As this plate is of great importance to us in our consideration of Goya as a thinker, we shall begin by quoting Señor Beruete's remarks upon the subject.

De Beruete,—*Goya Grabador*, p. 150.

266. 16. El Coloso (287 mm. high \times 208 mm. wide). Grabado al humo (Lamina 79).

"A colossus, an immense giant, nude, back view, his arms rested on his knees, turns his face towards the spectator. Behind one sees a dark sky in which there shines tenuously the moon in one of her phases.

"Signed low down on the left: 'Goya.'

"The wonder of this composition, so unlike any

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other, is its sense of grandeur and size. What enormous dimensions must they be of this colossus who is so much larger than anything we have any idea of that it gives us the feeling that he could reach the moon if he were to stand on his feet ; and so just is the scaling of this engraving and its perspective, everything so aptly managed so as to produce an enormous colossus, inasmuch as the landscape—much nearer than he is—hills, towns, everything in its extent and magnitude, are insignificant beside the figure that is, notwithstanding, much further away than they are ? It is not conceivable that plastic art could give a more assured and original idea of grandeur than what Goya has conceived and created in this work, a veritable marvel of ingenuity and imagination.”

He next speaks of the technique, calling it a kind of “smoke engraving” because the effect is smoky. Something, in fact, like a mezzotint, where from a prepared copper, that if printed would give an absolutely black print, the lighter tones are scraped away. Goya used this method for the first and only time in this work and Beruete says, very handsomely : “It is curious to observe that considering that the artist used this method for

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the first time he achieved a great result, showing a technical mastery over engraving in general really most notable."

Having thus dealt with the technical side of the matter, where he is so much at home, he boldly puts over his tiller and enters the uncharted and dangerous waters of interpretation :

"I do not believe that the design which now occupies us has any desire to symbolize Humanity hoping for the new day, as Carderera thinks. Much less that it represents Napoleon. Neither do I understand for what reason Von Loga calls it Prometheus. It is in my judgment simply a visionary idea in which the artist has aimed at and obtained the expression of size and grandeur in an admirable manner."

So Beruete. We feel almost sure, however, that those readers who have followed carefully the elucidation of the *Disparates* will by now have learnt enough of Goya's mentality and methods to know that such commentary as this falls far short of extracting the full meaning and scope of this magnificent drawing. Still full weight must be given to this deeply considered and authoritative pronouncement of Spain's accepted authority on the great etcher. Quite clearly the subject has

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occupied him and he declares for a "visionary idea." We must, however, look his conclusion fairly in the face, and in doing so we have to remember that in the cases that form the body of this book his powers of penetration and discernment have never once asserted themselves. He has satisfied us, in the cases in which he has been quoted, with the warmth of appreciation he extends to Goya's powers of expression, even though that expression failed to prove expressive enough to make itself understandable to his critical faculties.

This failure seems to us to count against Beruete rather than against Goya, and this conviction cannot but awaken our mistrust in the former's opinion wheresoever it has to do with sympathetic vision. We are forced to conclude, very much against our will, that as regards this particular side of the artist's work Beruete does not understand Goya. Unapproached as he is in his grasp of the technical and purely manipulative side of Goya's work, it is a remarkable fact that the real mentality of his great countryman escapes him. This mentality was vivid, restless, reflective and vocal, it vibrated with sympathy, boiled with indignation, sprang to chastise and to amend. What it felt it felt enormously, cruelly, revengefully,

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and above all disdainfully. Feeling, at white heat, had to be followed by expression also at white heat. So to divorce what he expressed from what he thought is to offer to us a depleted and bankrupt virtuoso who never existed, an utterly impossible Goya.

In saying this we are conscious that this particular critic is rather unfairly picked out for our disparagement, when he is in fact in a great measure acting as the single mouthpiece of many other critics who have gone before him. His respect for these other authorities has possibly blinded him, and it must clearly be understood he has to bear the brunt of the battle simply because he is the most conspicuous and redoubtable champion in the field.

But Señor A. de Beruete is much more than this. He is both the ornament and the mouthpiece of a school,—the school that did such service to Art when it rose against the story-telling evil that had been fastened upon it during the more retrograde periods of the nineteenth century. This school has carried its aversion to anything approaching story or allegory so far, that they are now in such a case that should they be called upon to read the underlying intention of a design, given to it

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in all sincerity by the artist before the practice had fallen into disrepute, they are quite unable to do so. Apparently the power to wrest the motive from its setting has deserted them. We say "apparently"; but we must be on our guard against making any deduction of the kind from such an appearance, for where fashion forbids a symbol to appear, it may also have power to deter the ardent follower of the fashion from allowing himself to recognize the concealed meaning, though he is quite aware that it is there. On general principles—the principles that dictate the fashion—they may hold the belief that Goya would be a greater artist without any eruptions of his ardent mentality breaking through the serene face of pure and abstract art. If such a school were to hold this belief what would be easier, with the purpose of upholding the artist's prestige, to put the glass to their blind eye, and declare that no story, message, analogy, allegory, or whatever we choose to call it, is in sight?

We are at liberty to adopt this view of the case if we wish, rather than to accept the only apparent and unlikely alternative, which would be to conclude that these great authorities are too dense to see what Goya meant.

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So now in disregard of all schools, all fashions, all shibboleths, that in their turn dictate to a plastic world the shape their thoughts are to take, we will continue our search for the spirit of the real Goya, just as he has expressed it in his matchless prints.

Seated on the curved surface of the world is the vast figure of a man. He is silhouetted against a sky that is shot through with the first light of dawn, as is evidenced by the moon at the end of its last phase. The sun has risen away down on his left hand, and the first beams of its light illumine the man's face and the upper part of his body and touch the cities and the plains that are seen between us and the figure. His feet, owing to the earth's curvature, are out of sight below the horizon.

We now direct our attention with great care to the quality of surface that has been given to the flesh, and to the edges that are shown clearly outlined against the sky. Over the shoulders and along the left side of the figure the skin is smooth and the outline is sharp. We are able quite fully to satisfy ourselves about this as the incidence of the light reveals the flesh very distinctly. Now if we examine the skin in those parts where the light has not yet fallen we note

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its fury quality. Under the arm we can see through to the sky, but the space of light, somewhat square in shape, that we might have expected to find with sharp clear-cut edges is not so at all. Its edges are indistinct with the thickness of the fur that covers the unillumined parts. We note the same thing behind the calf of the leg, and over the right side of the back and the buttocks the hair is very clearly indicated, springing as it were from the line of the spinal column. On the right buttock the hair is thick and shaggy, but on the left there is no hair at all, for its edge against the sky is as smooth as it is on his shoulders. It would seem, then, that the growing light of dawn had some mysterious power to remove the fur with which the man is covered.

The suggestion is clear that Man was not always Man, that it is the light of knowledge, slowly spreading and enveloping him, touching him with thought as it were with the magic wand, that strips from him the garment of the beast, the lingering animal covering that belonged to him in the dim past, that hung about him in his infancy, and which he trails after him into the burgeoning day. No fallen angel here, no undischarged debtor to some legendary benefactor, no "poor

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relation " cringing to some exclusive and well-to-do deity, only the aboriginal child of earth's primal generation, emerging from his fawnhood and his fears to grasp the kingdom to which he finds himself the long lost heir.

The man's face is so expressive that it seems impossible to miss the look of surprised and sudden understanding that fills it. He is looking up into the great vault of space, and the whole figure is tense with the shock of a momentary enlightenment upon some question that has puzzled him for uncounted ages. All at once he sees what he is and where he is, he realizes his size and grasps at last the scale of things. He looks down upon his works and the cities he has built and the temples of his gods that embellish them. Now he knows that man is greater than his works,—greater than his gods, that the world is a tiny place in which he is imprisoned—the world that he has thought so large and so wonderful. It is he who is measureless and the whole wide stretch of space is his—his to conquer and to dare, if he will throw off his old belittling beliefs and his habits of reliance upon hypothetical powers that are powerless, beings that have never been.

In his face we see the birth of a new self-reliance,

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a new self-esteem that will, when it reaches its full stature, help him, as Beruete says, to reach the moon.

There are traces in the prints that originally the "Colossus" leant his head upon his hand. If in our minds we reconstruct the design in this way we realize that the result would be to give too much repose to the figure, and that the tenseness and alertness that follow the sudden enlightenment would be lost. If we were to attempt to express in a few words the meaning that the design carries we should do it in some such terms as these : "Light falls upon the spirit of Man, and he understands."

That is its statement in its simplest terms, but there is more besides that it conveys. There is that look of relief—relief scarcely realized in full at the first shock, but an awakening, growing, expanding relief, such as a condemned man might give expression to on hearing at the last moment that he had been reprieved. The long, inarticulate deflation of the lungs through the parted lips, followed by a momentary relaxation of the tensed frame.

Expression such as this, so deeply felt, so unerringly, so completely rendered, places this design

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on the very pinnacle of Goya's achievement. It is charged with a sense of all that humanity has proved to be, and in an equal measure with a sense of all that it has proved not to be. *Not* a slave, *not* an imperfect copy of something infinitely greater, *not* an unsatisfactory and undutiful servant, *not* disloyal to a trust that has been fastened upon him, *not* weighed down with an insupportable load of obligation to some dissatisfied creator. None of these intolerable things, but a free agent lifted by the power of his own endeavour to an unique place in nature, wrenched by his own struggles from the narrow doors of that dim slaughter-house where he was born, possessor of his own unconquerable soul, in fact a Man.

If we now refer back to Beruete's analysis we can detect the shortcomings of the "exalted method" of enquiry. We note the importance of the spirit that cannot pause to acquaint itself with the significance of natural phenomena. The phrase—"the moon in one of her phases" is characteristic, because it is slovenly, and betrays ignorance, either real or assumed, that the moon, in the northern hemisphere, is on the right of the sun at sunrise and on the left at sunset. This is just a natural fact that Goya was aware of and

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he placed the moon where it is in order to make it clear that dawn was intended and not sunset. But the most remarkable omission is the fur. Is it possible that Beruete regarded those carefully considered edges of the figure where they are outlined against the sky as just evidence of the careless way in which Goya handled such things? It is on a par with the same critic's treatment of the elephant in *Disparate No. I*, and the dummy soldier in *Disparate Claro*.

We may fairly deduce that the only line of approach to Goya's thoughts is along the line of life, real palpitating life, warm and intimate, with a close handgrasp upon the forces and the facts of nature that comes of going up and down among the ways of men. "Visionary ideas" never did move Goya to take up his needle and produce an etching. His artistic side reacted to some strong overmastering impulse, the result of something that he had seen and that had moved him deeply, as for instance in the case of the three great etchings of "*The Prisoners*," which are done to give expression to his compassion after visiting a prison.

But the fact remains that the intention of the drawing has failed to penetrate minds that from their public reputation should be regarded as

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penetrable. Even Professor Rothenstein, whose mind can often spread a wing and circle in a region rather above the obvious, gives no sign of having recognized anything in the plate but what any print seller might see. He casually refers to "a plate of a colossal figure seated on a hill overlooking an immense landscape" and he gives it as his opinion that it is one of "the most impressive of Goya's etchings outside the actual series." To what a depth have we fallen!

But we must remember Carderera who saw in it "Humanity hoping for the new day." Here at any rate is an attempt to understand Goya. What more he may have understood we are unable to say, as his book has so far remained beyond our reach, and it is only Beruete's mention of him that enables us to do him this amount of justice.

In the latter part of Beruete's comment he expresses his admiration for the versatility and resource with which Goya invents a new method and employs it with astonishing success at the first attempt. He, however, stops short of asking himself the natural question why Goya felt a new method necessary in this case. In the answer to this question we have the finger-post pointing

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to the difficulty that confronted the artist in working out his idea. Let us suppose for a moment that he had adopted his usual method of the etched line and the aquatint. At once we realize the impossibility of getting anything approaching to the subtlety and elusive suggestiveness of the varying edges. The shagginess over the right buttock and tufts that hang from the back of the right arm must have been indicated by uncompromising lines along the direction of the hairs, and the mystery and charm of the thought, more hinted at than baldly stated, would have disappeared. The fur of the half-emancipated fawn would have been replaced by the hair of a piebald monster, giving size and grandeur enough, if that were all that he needed, but the delicate presentation of a deep and poetic conception would have been ruined.

It is here that we get an indication of the reason that prompted Goya to destroy the plate after he had made three prints from it. He knew from experience how quickly the effect obtained from aquatint deteriorates in the press, and here was a plate that consisted almost entirely of aquatint or its more perishable equivalent. In his ordinary plates, when the aquatint perished, there remained

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always the etched line to secure and retain a reasonable comprehensibility in the result, but here there was no line deep-bitten and permanent to rely upon, and who could tell how long the scraped tones would last even in most experienced hands? Once those tones began to falter and lose their values, away would go the delicately constructed fabric of poetic conception and all would be meaningless and trite.

It is a solemn thought that the very contingency from which he sought so forcefully to defend himself overtook him after all—not through deterioration of the plate but through deterioration of man's powers of understanding a plate. During the last hundred years it has been a drawing of a big man sitting on a hill, grand enough and impressive certainly, but little more. To your tents, O Israel!

It will be safe to say that before he began this book every reader regarded the designs which it contains, if he knew them at all, as completely obscure and inexplicable, but now that he is acquainted with the meaning of each he will most probably ask himself the question whether after all they are really so obscure as he thought. As he turns back and examines them afresh he will,

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we believe, be astonished at the clearness with which the meaning in each particular case stands out with unmistakable distinctness. Like the egg in the nest, the bird in the cage, or the fire in the grate, the heart of the mystery lies exposed so that no one could miss it. And yet they baffled us all for a hundred years ! How is it done ?

Goya's system of symbolism was, like his process of etching, a system of his own. Whether it is derived from earlier artists of his own country we are not learned enough to say, but certainly it is a system quite different to what we English-speaking people are accustomed. The symbolism of to-day, as employed by artists who help to enliven our evening papers, has fallen so low that the reader is never expected to bring any intellectual power to bear upon it. He is apparently not credited with possessing any intellect, for each component of the cartoon is plainly labelled so that he can make no mistake. Possibly for this reason our faculties of interpretation have become atrophied and are no longer equal to any strain whatever.

Where Goya's symbolism offers such difficulty seems to be in the reliance that is placed in our

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possessing a wider experience than we have of the resources of linear expression. The needle in Goya's hands becomes a weapon of precision that demands a literal and concise translation into parts of speech. The reader will have noticed many instances of this precision and of the literal meaning that it requires. For example we may quote the Elephant that stands "just outside" the circus. The critic who begins "in the midst" is clearly going to arrive at nothing. And yet no one is going to claim that this faculty of the Great Spaniard to invent these elaborate word-picture-puzzles is in itself entirely admirable and deserving of emulation. It is not difficult to imagine what such a practice might lead to in inferior hands. It must remain an isolated shoot or sport of his peculiar genius that may puzzle many good people to find room for within the four corners of their own definition of what great art should be.

Big fish will always burst small nets and there we must leave it.

There is a thought with which we sometimes play in our best moments, and here, at the end of this book, it presents itself, a little unexpectedly perhaps, for our final word. Possibly

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the reader may be indulgent enough to receive it in the spirit of goodwill that gives it birth. It is this :—

What would be the result at the end of twenty-five years, let us say—the space of time that was required by Germany to teach her people to become Pan-Germans—supposing the Education authorities were to hang a carefully reproduced and enlarged copy of the “Colossus” in every schoolroom in the country? To find room for these pictures older ones representing the child Samuel at his prayers, maps of the Holy Land, or whatever pictorial encouragement for young minds to expand had been placed there from time to time by our fathers, might have to be taken down and put away. One imagines that a nation which kept before the eyes of its children a conception of human life so exalted and so hopeful would reap later on a bountiful harvest of manliness and courage in the lives of the next generation. The day must surely dawn when children in the schools of the nation are told something of the facts and of the romance of man’s origin, and when that day comes one can think of no more attractive and natural way of doing it than by employing Goya’s inspired and impressive piece of symbolism.

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There are moments in a man's life when he is overtaken by a doubt as to whether the system for which the infant Samuel stands has been altogether a success.

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